

PERSIAN LETTERS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE

F R E N C H

O F

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BARON DE MONTESQUIEU.

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САНКТ-ПЕТЕРБУРГСКАЯ ПУБЛИЧНАЯ БИБЛИОТЕКА

PERSIAN LETTERS.

I Shall write no epistle dedicatory, nor beg protection for this book. It will be read, if it is good; if bad, I care not whether it be read or no.

I have begun with these letters, to try the taste of the public. I have many more in my cabinet, which may be published in time.

But it is upon condition that I am not found out; for, as soon as my name is known, I am silent for ever. I know a lady who walks very well, and yet limps if any one looks on her. The faults of the work may satisfy the critics, without exposing those of my person to them. Besides, were it told who I am, every one would cry, It is like him: his book is his true character. He might have employed his time better; it does not become a man of gravity. The critics never miss these reflections, because little or no wit is required in hitting upon them.

The Persians, who wrote these letters, lodged where I did; we lived together; and, as they looked upon me as one of another world, they concealed nothing from me. Indeed it was hardly possible for men, at such a distance from home, to have secrets that could affect me; and, accordingly, they communicated to me the greatest part of their letters. I took copies of them, and laid my hands on some which they would willingly have kept from me, as exposing a little too much the Persian vanity and jealousy.

Thus I am a translator only. My greatest trouble was to make this work as conformable as I could to

2 PERSIAN LETTERS.

our managers. I have endeavoured to ease the reader as much as possible with respect to the Asiatic stile, and have left out abundance of sublime expressions, which would have carried him into the clouds, and tired him with their sublimity.

This, however, is not all I have done for him. I have curtailed the long compliments, of which the orientals are more lavish than even we ourselves; and have left out most of those minute passages, which cannot well bear the light, and ought always to be buried between friends.

If most of those that have published collections of letters had done the same thing, there would scarce have been enough left to trouble the prefs with.

I cannot help observing, that I have been often surprized to find these Persians as well informed as myself of the manners and customs of our nation. Even the nicest circumstances have not escaped them; as they have done many Germans who have travelled through France. I impute it to their long abode among us, without reckoning that it is easier for an Asiatic to learn the French manners in one year, than for a French man to learn those of Asia in four; because the former discover as much as the latter conceal themselves.

Custom permits every translator, nay, even the most barbarous commentator, to adorn the head of his version, or his glossary, with the panegyric of the original, and to set forth its utility, merit, and excellence. I have done no such thing. The reasons are easily guessed at. One of the best is, that it would be very tedious in a place of itself generally very insipid; I mean a preface.

LETTER I.

USBEK to his friend RUSTAN, at Ispahan.

WE staid but one day at Com: when we had paid our devotions at the tomb of the virgin who brought forth twelve prophets, we proceeded on our journey, and arrived yesterday at Tauris, being the twenty-fifth of our departure from Ispahan.

Rica and I are perhaps the two first Persians that ever left their own country out of a desire of knowledge; and renounced the sweets of tranquillity, for the laborious search of wisdom.

We were born in a flourishing kingdom; but we did not believe there was nothing to be learned ~~out of~~ of its limits; or that there was no light but the oriental, by which we could be illuminated.

Tell me what they say of our travels. Do not flatter me. I do not expect many approbators. Direct to me at Erzeron, where I shall stay some time. Adieu, dear Rustan; and be assured, that wherever I am, thou wilt always have a faithful friend.

Tauris, 15th of the Moon
Saphar, 1711.

LETTER II.

USBEK to the chief black eunuch at his seraglio in Ispahan.

THOU art the faithful guardian of the fairest women in Persia. I have trusted with thee the dearest things in the world. Thou hast in thy hands the keys of those fatal doors, that are never opened

4 PERSIAN LETTERS.

but to me. Whilst thou watchest over the treasure of my heart, it is at rest, and in an intire security. Thou art upon guard in the silence of the night, and the tumult of the day. Thy indefatigable cares support thy virtue when it staggers. If the women thou guardest would deviate from their duty, thou deprivest them of all hope of doing it. Thou art the flail of vice, and the pillar of fidelity.

Thou commandest them, and thou obeyest them. Thou dost whatever they will of thee, and they do implicitly whatever thou willest of them, according to the laws of the seraglio. Thou makest it thy glory to render them the meanest services, and with respect and fear submittest to their lawful orders. Thou servest them as the slave of their slaves; but as master, in thy turn, commandest them as sovereignly as I do myself, when thou art apprehensive of any transgression of the laws of chastity and modesty.

Remember that I raised thee from nothing; and from the lowest of my slaves, listed thee to the office thou art now possessed of; the charge of the delights of my soul. Behave thyself with the most profound submission towards those that divide my love: but at the same time make them sensible of their extreme dependence. Provide for them all innocent pleasures. Deceive their disquiets; amuse them with music, dances, and delicious liquors. Persuade them to meet often. If they would go into the country, carry them thither: but take care that no man comes near them, at the peril of his life. Exhort them to cleanliness, the image of the purity of the foul. Talk frequently of me to them. I long to see them again, in that charming place of which themselves are the greatest ornament.

Tauris, 18th of the Moon

Saphar, 1711.

LETTER III.

ZACHI to USBEK, at Tauris.

WE ordered the chief eunuch to carry us into the country. He will tell thee that no accident befell us. When we were to cross the river, and quit our litters; we, according to custom, put ourselves into cases: two slaves carried us on their shoulders, and we escaped the eyes of all men.

How can I live, dear Usbek, in the seraglio at Isfahan; in those places where I eternally call to mind my past pleasures; where my desires every day suffer fresh violence! I wander from one apartment to another, always searching, but I never find thee. Instead of thee, I meet a cruel remembrance of my lost happiness. Sometimes I am in the place, where I first received thee in my arms: sometimes in that where thou decidedst the famous dispute among thy wives. Each of us pretended to be superior to the other in beauty. We presented ourselves before thee, after having put our inventions to the rack, to dress ourselves out to the best advantage. With pleasure didst thou behold the wonders of our art. Thou admiredst the ardency of our passion, and the extent of our imagination to please thee; but soon didst thou give up all those borrowed charms, and fix thy eyes on the graces of nature. Thou destroyedst all our work. We must strip ourselves of those ornaments that were become incommodious to thee. We must appear before thee in our native simplicity. What cared I for modesty! I was inspired with an ambition to conquer. Oh happy Usbek, what worlds of charms were then in thy view! we saw thy eyes a long while roving from enchantment to enchantment. A long while

6 PERSIAN LETTERS.

thy soul remained in doubt, where to fix. Every new grace demanded a tribute of thee. We were in an instant covered with thy kisses. Thy curious glances reached the most secret places. A thousand different postures are presented to thy view. Thou commandest us with pleasure, and with transport we obey. I own, Usbek, a passion stronger than ambition inspired me with the hopes of pleasing thee. I insensibly perceived that thy heart was mine. Thou tookest me. Thou leftest me. Again thou tookest me, and I knew how to keep thee. Mine was the triumph, and despair my rivals. It seemed as if there were only we two in the world, and nothing else in it worth our care. Would to heaven my rivals had had the courage to stay and see what tokens of love I received from thee. Had they been witnesses of my raptures, they would have seen the difference between my love and theirs; they would have seen that though they might dispute charms with me, they could never pretend to be so sensible of the joy as I was—But where am I? whither does this vain relation lead me? it is a misfortune not to have been beloved; but it is an affront to be beloved no more. Thou leavest us, Usbek, to go rambling in barbarous climates. How then! dost thou think it is nothing to be beloved? Ah Usbek, thou dost not know what thou losest. I sigh, but my sighs are not heard; I weep, and thou dost not see my tears. Love seems to live in this seraglio, and thou art so insensible as to fly from it. Ah my dear Usbek, how happy wouldest thou be, didst thou know thy own happiness!

From the seraglio at Fatme, the 21st
of the Moon Maharram, 1711.

LETTER IV.

ZEPHIS to USBEK, at Erzeron.

THE black monster has at last resolved to throw me into despair. He would by force take from me my slave Zelida: Zelida, who has served me with so much affection, and has so nice a hand in whatever relates to ornaments and graces. He was not satisfied with the grief that attended this separation, he would have it accompanied with dishonour. The traitor would insinuate that there was something criminal in the confidence I placed in her; and because he was tired with staying behind a door, where I had posted him, he presumed to suppose he heard or saw what I never did so much as imagine. I am very unfortunate. Neither my retirement nor my virtue can defend me from extravagant suppositions. A vile slave attacks me in thy very heart, and I must defend myself. No: I value myself too much, to descend to justifications. I will have no guarantee for my conduct but thyself, but thy love and mine, and if I must tell thee so, dear Usbek, my tears.

*From the seraglio at Fatme, the 29th of
the Moon Mabarram, 1711.*

LETTER V.

RUSTAN to USBEK, at Erzeron.

THOU art the subject of all the discourse of Isfahan. They talk of nothing but thy leaving it. Some attribute it to levity of mind; others to chagrin. Thy friends only defend thee, and they con-

8 PERSIAN LETTERS.

vince no body. They cannot comprehend that thou canst quit thy wives, thy relations, thy friends, to visit climates unknown to the Persians. Rica's mother is inconsolable, and demands of thee her son, whom she says thou hast stolen from her. For my part, dear Usbek, I am naturally disposed to approve of whatever thou dost, but I cannot forgive thy absence ; and thy reasons for it have no weight with my friendship. Adieu. Love me always.

Ispahan, 28th of the Moon

Rebiab 1st, 1711.

LETTER VI.

USBEK to his friend NESSIR, at Ispahan.

A Day's journey from Erivan we left the territories of Persia, and entered the Turkish dominions. Twelves days after that we arrived at Erzeron, where we staid three or four months.

I must own to thee, Nessir, I felt a secret grief when I lost sight of Persia, and found myself in the midst of perfidious Osmanlins. According as I advance in the country of these infidels, I grow myself, methinks, more and more an infidel.

My country, my family, my friends, are ever in my thoughts ; my tenderness awakes ; a certain uneasiness seizes me, and shews that I have undertaken too much for my repose.

But what troubles me most is my wives. I cannot think of them, without the most tormenting care.

Not that I love them, Nessir, I am on that account in a state of insensibility. I have no desires. Living in so numerous a seraglio, I prevented love,

PERSIAN LETTERS. 9

and destroyed him by himself. But as insensible as I am of desire, I am not so of jealousy ; I consider them as a company of women left almost to themselves, with a parcel of sorry fellows to take charge of them. I should hardly think myself safe, were my slaves faithful. But what will come of it, if they should not be so ? What melancholy news may I receive in the remote countries, through which I am about to travel ? it is a misfortune, for which my friends cannot find any relief. A seraglio is a place, the secrets of which they ought not to be acquainted with. And what could they do ? Had not I better a thousand times let things pass with impunity, than make a noise of them with correction ? Dear Nessir, I rest all my cares in thy bosom, and it is all the comfort I have in my present condition.

Erzeron, 10th of the Moon

Rebiab ad, 1711.

LETTER VII.

FATME to USBEK, at Erzeron.

IT is two months, dear Usbek, since thou leftest me, and yet I can scarce think thou art gone ; so full is my heart of trouble, and so little capable of reason. I run about the seraglio as if thou wert still there, and I cannot satisfy myself to the contrary. What wouldst thou have become of a woman who loves thee, and was accustomed to thy embraces; whose only employment was to give thee new proofs of her tenderness ? Free by the advantage of her birth, a slave by the violence of her love.

When I married thee, my eyes had never seen the face of a man, and never have they to this day seen

10 PERSIAN LETTERS.

any one but * thee ; for I do not reckon those frightful creatures, the eunuchs, to be men ; and it is their least imperfection, that they are not so. When I compare thy beauty with their deformity, I cannot help thinking myself happy. My imagination cannot furnish me with an idea more ravishing, than the charms of thy enchanting person. I swear to thee, Usbek, if I were allowed to leave this place, to which the necessity of my condition confines me ; if I could get away from those that are on the watch all around me ; if I were to chuse among all the men that live in this capital of nations, I swear to thee, Usbek, thou only shouldest be my choice. There cannot be a man in the world who deserves to be beloved, but thee.

Do not think that thy absence has made me neglect a beauty which is dear to thee. Though no-body is to have a sight of me ; though all the ornaments of dress which I make use of are useless to thy happiness, yet I strive to entertain myself in a habit of pleasing.

* ever go to bed without being perfumed with the delicious essences. I call to mind the happy time when thou camest to my arms. A flattering dream seduces me, and shews me the dear object of my love ; and as my imagination is delighted with its hopes, so it is lost in its desires. Sometimes I hope thou wilt be tired with the fatigues of travelling, and return to thy seraglio. Night passes away with such pleasing dreams, which awake or asleep are alike vain. I seek thee by my side, and thou seemest to fly from me. The fire that devours me, dissipates these enchantments itself, and recalls my wandering spirits. I find myself then so animated—Thou wilt not believe

* The women in Persia are shut up more closely than the Turkish or Indian women.

PERSIAN LETTERS. 11

it, Usbek, but it is impossible to live in this condition. The fire burns in my veins. Why cannot I express to thee what I feel so sensibly! And why do I feel so sensibly what I cannot express to thee! In that moment, Usbek, I would give the empire of the world for one kiss of thee. How unhappy is the woman, whose desires are so violent, to be deprived of him who can only satisfy them; who, delivered up to herself, and having nothing to divert her, must live in a constant course of sighs, and in the fury of the most tormenting passion; who, far from being happy herself, has not even the advantage of serving to make another so: useless ornament of a seraglio, kept for the honour and not for the happiness of her husband!

You men are very cruel; you are pleased that we have desires which we cannot satisfy, and you treat us as though we had none; though you would be very sorry if we had not; You believe they will be enflamed at sight of you, after the longest mortifications. A man cannot easily make himself be beloved; and the quicker way is to obtain from our complexion, what you dare not hope from your merit.

Adieu, my dear Usbek, adieu. Assure thyself that I live only to adore thee; my soul is full of thee; and thy absence, instead of making me forget thee, would encrease my love, if it was possible for it to be more violent.

From the seraglio at Isfahan,
the 12th of the Moon Re-
biab 1st, 1712.

LETTER VIII.

USBEK to his friend RUSTAN, at Ispahan.

I Received yours at Erzeron, where I still remain. I did not doubt but my departure would make a noise, nor am I in pain about it. What wouldest thou have me pursue; the prudence of my enemies, or my own?

I was very young when I came first to court. I may presume to say, my heart was not corrupted there. I formed a great design to myself, and durst even there be virtuous. Assoon as I knew vice I fled it; but drew nearer it afterwards, to pull off its mask. I carryed truth as far as the foot of the throne. I talked a language till then unknown. I put flattery out of countenance, and at the same time surprized both the adorers and the idol.

But when I found my sincerity had made me enemies, that the ministers were jealous of me, and I was not at all in favour with the prince; that in a corrupt court I could not support myself by solid virtue, I resolved to quit it. I feigned a great attachment to the sciences; and by feigning it some time, did indeed acquire it. I no more concerned myself with affairs, but retired to a country-house. This retirement had its inconveniencies. I was still exposed to the malice of my enemies, and had hardly any way left to defend myself against it. Some secret advice obliged me to look to myself; I could think of no better security than a voluntary exile; and my retirement from court furnished me with a plausible pretence for it. I waited on the king, and told him the desire I had to be instructed in the sciences of the west. I insinuated to him, that my travels might be useful to the public. I

found favour in his sight. I departed, and deprived my enemies of a victim. This, Rustan, was the true motive of my travels. Let Isphahan talk; defend me not but to such as love me; leave my enemies to their malicious interpretations. I should be exceedingly happy if it was the only evil that could befall me.

They talk of me at this time: perhaps hereafter I shall be too much forgotten, and that my friends— No, Rustan, I will not give way to this melancholy thought. I shall always be dear to them; I depend upon their fidelity, as I do on thine.

Erzeron, the 20th of the Moon.

Gemmadi ad. 1711.

LETTER IX.

The CHIEF EUNUCH to IBBI, at Erzeron.

THOU followest thy antient master in his travels. Thou passest through provinces and kingdoms. No chagrins can make any impression upon thee. Every moment presents thee with something new. Whatever thou seest diverts thee, and makes thy time pass away imperceptibly.

It is not the same with me, who am shut up in a terrible prison, always surrounded with the same objects, and tormented with the same cares; under the weight of which, and fifty years disquiets, I groan, and am ready to sink. I can truly say, that in the whole course of a long life, I have not known one cheerful day, nor one moment's ease.

When my master came to the cruel resolution to trust his women with me, and seduced me by a thousand promises and threats, to part with myself for

ever; being weary of painful service, I resolved to sacrifice my passions to my repose and my fortunes. Wretch as I was! I foresaw what I should not suffer, but not what I should gain. I flattered myself with the gain, but did not consider the loss. I hoped to be delivered from the assaults of love, by an impotence of satisfying it. Alas! the effect of the passions is extinguished in me, without extinguishing the cause; and very far from relieving me, mine were continually enraged by the objects with which I was environed. I entered the seraglio, where every thing inspired me with regret for the loss I had sustained. Every minute offered new excitements to desire. The natural graces, which charmed my eyes, at the same time, preyed upon my heart. The beauties, that were exposed to me, made me look on the man that possessed them with the most racking envy. In this thought, I could not lead a lady to my master's bed, I could not undress her, but as soon as I returned to my chamber, my heart was seized with rage, and my soul with horrid despair.

Such was my miserable youth, I was myself my only confident. Consumed with secret sorrow and care, my life was my greatest burden; and I was forced to look, as severely as I could, on those very women whom I desired to gaze on with the most tender glances. I should have been ruined, had they observed me. What advantage would they not have taken of it?

I remember when I once waited on a lady at her bath, I was so transported, that I was no more my own master, and had the boldness to lay my hand on a most formidable place. I presently thought of what I had done, and that that day would be my last. However I had the good luck to escape the thousand deaths which threatened me; but the beauty, who

was the cause and the witness of my weakness, made me pay dear for her silence; I entirely lost my authority over her; and she often obliged me afterwards to make compliances, every one of which put my life in danger.

At last, the fire of youth is past away. I am old, and on that account in a state of tranquillity. I look on the women with indifference, and return upon them the same contempt, and the same torments, which they have made me suffer. I always call to mind that I was born to command them; and methinks I become a man again on certain occasions, where my duty authorizes me to do it still. I hate them, since I ceased to love them, and that reason has removed the veil which concealed their weaknesses. Though I guard them for another, I have a secret pleasure in being obeyed by them; and when I deprive them of what they would have, it seems as if it was on my own account, and I have an indirect satisfaction in it. I am like a little emperor in the seraglio; and my ambition, the only passion that is left me, receives a little contentment in that. I pride in the dependence they have upon me, and in being always necessary to them. I willingly take upon me the hatred of all these women, which fixes me the faster in my office; nor do they find an ingrate in me. I am always a spy upon their most innocent pleasures; and stand always before them like an immoveable barrier. They form projects, and I on a sudden put a stop to them. I am prepared with repulses, and have scruples always at hand, whenever they propose any thing. I am continually talking to them of duty, virtue, chastity, modesty; and eternally teasing them with the weakness of their sex, and the authority I have over them. I then complain of the obligation I ly under, to use such seve-

16 PERSIAN LETTERS.

rity; and seem as if I would have them believe I had no other motive than their own interest, and an extreme desire to serve them.

Notwithstanding all this, I too have my torments as well as they; and, in my turn, meet with an infinite variety of vexations. These revengeful creatures are every day projecting how to be quit with me; and so they are sometimes, with a vengeance. The turns of rule between us, are like the ebbings and flowings of the sea. They charge me daily with the most mortifying services. They affect a scorn which is without example. And, without any respect to my years, they frequently call me up ten times a night, and that for the least trifles. I am wearied to death with their repeated orders, commands, employments, and caprices! They relieve one another to keep me in exercise, and one would think there is a succession of whimsies among them. Sometimes they please themselves with giving me the alarm; and oblige me to redouble my cares, by false insinuations against one another. Sometimes they come and tell me, that a young man has been seen lurking about the walls. At other times, that a noise has been heard, or a letter been delivered. All this gives me disquiet; and they do but laugh at it. It tickles them to see how I am vexed at it. Sometimes they will tie me behind a door, and keep me there night and day. They are very skilful in counterfeiting sickness, swoonings, frights. They never want a pretence to gain their point of me. At such times I am bound to a blind obedience, and a complaisance without limits. For a man in my office to refuse them on these occasions, would be a thing never heard of; and if I should dispute their orders, it would be a sufficient warrant for them to chastise me. I had rather, dear Ibbi, lose my life, than be humbled after this base manner.

This is not all. I am never sure of my master's favour a moment, having so many enemies in his heart always contriving how to ruin me. And these enemies have certain moments in which I cannot be heard; moments in which he can refuse them nothing, and in which I must needs be always in the wrong. I lead women enraged to the bed of my master. Do you think they will do me any service, and that my side will be the strongest there? May not I well be afraid of their tears, their sighs, their embraces, and even their pleasures? They are on the scene of their triumphs, and their charms become terrible to me. Present services in a minute efface all my past ones; and who can answer for a master who is no longer himself?

How often have I lain down in favour, and risen in disgrace? What had I done the day that I was so basely lashed round the seraglio? I left a woman in my master's arms: as soon as she saw he was inflamed, she poured out a torrent of tears: she lamented, and managed her lamentations so well, that they grew upon her as fast as love grew upon him. How could it possibly defend myself in so critical a minute? I was undone when I least thought of it. I was the victim of an amorous negotiation, and of a treaty formed by sighs. Such, dear Ibbi, is the cruel condition in which I have always lived.

How happy art thou, whose duty is confined only to the persons of Ulbek! It is easy for thee to please him, and preserve his good graces as long as thou livest!

From the Seraglio at Isphah, the last
of the Moon Saphar, 1711.

LETTER X.

MIRZA to his friend USBEK, at Erzeron.

THOU wert the only man that could make me amends for Rica's absence, and no-body but Rica could give me comfort in thine! Thou art wanting, Usbek; thou wert the soul of our society; and how hard is it to break those ties that were fastened by friendship and reason! We dispute here very much, and morals are generally the subject. Yesterday the question was, whether pleasure is happiness, and felicity consists in the satisfaction of the senses, or the practice of virtue? I have often heard thee say, that men were born to be virtuous; and that justice is a quality as necessary to them as existence; pr'ythee explain to me what thou meanest by it.

I have discoursed with the Mollacs, who torment me with passages out of the Alcoran; for I do not talk to them as a true believer, but as a man, a citizen, a father of a family.

LETTER XI.

USBEK to MIRZA, at Ispahan.

THOU askest me whether the happiness of men consists in pleasure and sensual satisfactions, or in the practice of virtue? Thou wilt have me explain to thee at large, what I have more than once said to thee, that men are born to be virtuous; and that justice is a quality as proper to them as their existence.

If thou wert to consult the Mollacs, they would overwhelm thee with passages out of the Holy Alcoran, without considering that thou dost not talk to

them as a true believer, but as a man, as a citizen, and as a father of a family !

To perform what thou requirest of me, I do not think there is need of making use of very abstracted reasons. There are certain truths which it is not enough to convince men of, they must also be made palpable to them. Such are the truths of morality. Perhaps this piece of history will touch thee more than a philosophical thesis.

There was a people among the Arabians, called Troglodites, descended from the antient Troglodites, who, according to historians, were more like beasts than men. These latter were not so deformed indeed, they were not hairy like bears, they did not hiss, they had two eyes; but they were so wicked and wild, that they had no principle of equity or justice among them.

They had a king of a foreign origin, who, to correct the wickedness of their nature, treated them severely; but they rose against him, killed him, and rooted out all the royal family.

This blow being struck, they assembled together to settle a government, and, after much debate, they created magistrates; but they were scarce chosen before they became insupportable, and they massacred them also.

Delivered of this new yoke, they followed nothing but the dictates of their savage natures. They all agreed they would have no governor; that everyone should pursue his own interests, without consulting those of other men. This unanimous resolution was extremely grateful to all the Troglodites. They cried, " Why should I work myself to death for persons whom I am not at all concerned for ? I will mind myself only. I will live happy. What is it to me whether others are so or not ? What I

" want I will have; and if I have it, I shall not matter how miserable all the Troglodites are."

It was then seed-time; and every one said, " I will till my ground only for just so much corn as is necessary for my own subsistence. More than I need myself, is superfluous. I will not labour for nothing."

The lands of this little kingdom were not all alike fruitful. Some were dry, some were mountainous; and the lower grounds were watered with several springs. There happened a great drought this year, insomuch that the up-lands failed entirely, whereas the low-lands watered with the springs were very fruitful. Thus almost all the inhabitants of the mountains perished for want of bread: those of the low country being so hard-hearted as to deny them a portion of their harvest.

The next year was a wet season. The up-lands abounded with corn, and the lower were drowned. Half of the nation again cried out famine; but the mountaineers were as hard-hearted as the inhabitants of the low-lands had been.

One of the principal men in the country had a very handsome wife. His neighbour fell in love with her, and took her from him. This occasioned a great quarrel, and, after much scolding, and many blows, they agreed to refer the matter to a Troglodite, who, while the republic lasted, had some credit among them. They went to him, and were going to tell him their case; but he cut them short: " What matters it to me, said he, which of you has the woman? I must look after my ground, and not waste my time upon your affairs, to the detriment of my own. Pray leave me, and do not disturb me with your differences." At these words he went about his business. The ravisher, who was the strong-

er man of the two, swore he would rather lose his life than part with the woman ; and the husband was forced to return home, cursing the injustice of his neighbour, and the moroseness of the judge. As he was going to his house, he met with a young handsome woman coming from the well. He had now no woman of his own. This woman pleased him ; and he was much more pleased when he understood it was the wife of the man whom he had chosen to be the judge between him and the ravisher, and who had made so light of his case. He took her, and carried her home with him by force.

There was a man who had a field pretty fertile, which he cultivated with care. Two of his neighbours joined together, drove him out of his house, and possessed themselves of his field. They entered into a league to defend themselves against all those that should endeavour to dispossess them, and maintained themselves in it several months : but one of them, being weary of enjoying in partnership what he might have all to himself, killed the other, and became sole master of the field. His empire was of short duration. Two other Troglodites came and fell upon him ; he was too weak for them both, and they murdered him, as he had done his partner.

A Troglodite, who was almost naked, saw some cloth to be sold. He demanded the price. Says the draper to himself, “ I ought not, indeed, to have more for my cloth than would purchase two bushels of wheat, but I will have as much as shall buy me eight bushels.” The man wanted the cloth, and must pay what the draper demanded. “ This is pretty well, says the draper ; I shall have bread enough now.” How is that, replied his customer ? Do you want corn ? I have some to sell ; but perhaps the price will startle you, for you know,

22 PERSIAN LETTERS.

" wheat is very dear, and the famine spreads almost
 " every where; but give me my money back, and
 " you shall have a bushel; and you shall not have it
 " cheaper, though you die of hunger."

A mortal distemper in the mean while raged in the country. An able physician arrived there out of a neighbouring one. His remedies were so effectual, that they cured all who took them. When the sickness was over, he went to those that he had cured, to be paid for the cure. But he met with denials only. He returned home worn out with the fatigue of his journey, and soon after understood that the same distemper had again got among the Troglodites, and raged worse than ever among that ungrateful people. They came to him this time, without waiting for him to come to them; " Go, unjust men as you are," said he to them, " there is a poison in your souls " more mortal than the sickness you would be cured " of. You do not deserve a dwelling-place upon " earth. You know not what humanity is, and are " ignorant of the rules of equity. I should think I " offended the gods who punish you, if I opposed the " justice of their wrath."

Erzeron, 3d of the Moon

Gemmadi ad. 1711.

L E T T E R XII.

USBEK to the same, at Ispahan.

THOU hast seen, dear Mirza, how the Troglodites perished by their own wickedness, and were the victims of their own injustice. Of so many families as were in the nation, two only were left, who escaped in the general destruction. These two men

were very singular. They had humanity, and were not strangers to justice. They loved virtue, and were united as much by the rectitude of their own minds, as by the corruption of their countrymen. They were witnesses of the common desolation, and no farther concerned in it than they were moved by pity. The destruction of their neighbours was a motive of farther union. They laboured with mutual solicitude for their mutual interest. They had no differences, but such as are the effect of a sweet and tender friendship. They lived a happy and peaceful life in a bye part of the country, separate from the rest of the inhabitants, who were not worthy of them. The soil seemed to produce of itself, so blest was the labour of their pure hands.

They loved their wives, and were tenderly beloved by them. They were wholly intent upon educating their children to virtue. They continually represented to them the calamities of their countrymen, and often set that moving example before their eyes. They, above all things, instilled into them this principle, that every private man's interest is inseparable from the interest of the community. To divide it, is ruin. That virtue is not a thing which should be troublesome to us, nor ought the exercise of it to give us pain; and that justice to another is charity to ourselves.

They had soon the consolation of virtuous fathers; which is, to have children like themselves. The young people, who grew up under them, increased by happy marriages. The number augmented. Union was preserved. Virtue, instead of being weakened, in a multitude, was, on the contrary, fortified, and spread every where by example.

Who can describe now the happiness of the Troglodites? So just a people must needs to be dear to the

gods. As soon as they opened their eyes to know the gods, they learned to fear them; religion refined their morals, and civilized the rudeness of nature.

They instituted feasts to the honour of the gods. The young men and maidens, adorned with flowers, celebrated the rites with dances, and the soft notes of Sylvan music. Banquets succeeded, and their joy was as universal as it was frugal. Plain nature spoke in these assemblies. Here it was that hearts were given and taken. Here the blushes of modest virgins betrayed those sentiments, which were soon confirmed by the consent of fathers; and here tender mothers pleased themselves with the agreeable foresight of their daughters future happiness, in the love and fidelity of their husbands. The blessings of heaven were implored in temples. Those blessings did not consist in riches, and a burdensom plenty. Such wishes were unworthy of the happy Troglodites. They only desired them for their countrymen; as to themselves, their parents health, their brothers friendship, their wives love, their childrens affection and obedience, were the only subjects of their prayers. The maidens brought thither the tender sacrifice of their hearty and demanded nothing of the gods but that they might make a Troglodite happy.

In the evening, when the flocks quitted the fields, and the tired oxen brought home the plough; these innocent people met, and over a light repast sung the crimes and punishment of the ancient Troglodites; and how virtue and felicity sprung up with the rising generation. They sung the greatness of the gods, their favours to men who address themselves to them, and their inevitable wrath against those that do not fear them. They then described the sweets of a country life, and the pleasures of a state always adorned

with innocence: after which they gave themselves up to those soft slumbers that are never disturbed by care and sorrow.

Nature contributed to their desires, as much as to their necessities. Covetousness was a stranger in this blessed climate. They made presents to each other, and the giver always thought he had the advantage. The nation of the Troglodites looked on themselves as one single family. Their flocks and herds were almost always intermixed, and the only trouble which they commonly spared themselves, was that of dividing them.

Erzeron, the 6th of the Moon
Gemmadi 1st, 1711.

LETTER XIII.

USBEK to the same.

I Cannot talk enough to thee of the virtue of the Troglodites. One of them said once, " My father is to rise to morrow betimes to go to plough; " I will be up two hours before him, and when he comes to his field, he shall find it ready ploughed " to his hand."

Said another to himself, " My sister seems to have " a kindness for such a young Troglodite, a kinsman " of ours; I will talk to my father, and get him to " consent to the marriage."

Another was told, " Some robbers have stolen " your kine: " I am sorry for it, says he; there was " a white heifer, which I designed for a sacrifice to " the gods."

Another was heard to say, " I must go to the temple, and return thanks to the gods for the re-

26 PERSIAN LETTERS.

“ covery of my brother, who is so dear to my father
“ and me.”

Or else, “ There is a field bordering on my father’s,
“ and those that work there are every day exposed to
“ the heats of the sun; I must plant some trees there,
“ that those poor men may repose themselves some-
“ times under their shade.”

Several Troglodites being on a time met together, an old man talked to a young one whom he suspected to have done an ill action, and reproached him for doing it. The other young Troglodite said, “ We do not believe he is guilty of it; but if he is, may he die the last of his family.”

A Troglodite was told, Strangers have plundered your house, and carried every thing away with them; “ Had they not been dishonest, replied he, I could have wished the gods to give them longer use of it than I have had.”

So much prosperity was not looked upon without envy. The neighbouring people assembled, and under a frivolous pretence resolved to take from them their sheep and cattle. When the Troglodites heard of it, they sent ambassadors to them, who spoke to this effect.

“ What have the Troglodites done to you? Have they forced away your wives, or robbed you of your cattle or sheep? Have they wasted your fields? No, we are just; we fear the gods. What then would you have of us? Is it wool to make you cloaths? Will you have the milk of our cows, or the fruits of our land? Lay down your arms; come to us, and you shall have all of them. But we swear by all that is sacred, if you enter our country as enemies, we will look upon you as an unjust people, and treat you as we would wild beasts.”

Their words were received with contempt. These

savages entered the lands of the Troglodites, whom they took to have no other defence than their innocence.

But they were well prepared to defend themselves; they placed their wives and children in the midst of them. They were surprized at the injustice, and not at the number of their enemies. An unusual warmth seized their breasts. One would die for his father; another for his wife and childrén; this for his brethren, that for his friends: all of them for the Troglodite nation. The post of him that expired was soon filled by another, who, besides the common cause, had the death of a private person to revenge.

Such was the combat between injustice and virtue. Those base wretches, who sought only booty, were not ashamed to fly; and they gave way to the virtue of the Troglodites, even without being affected by it.

Erzeron, the 9th of the Moon

Gemmadi ad, 1711.

L E T T E R XIV.

USBEK *to the same.*

AS the Troglodites daily increased in numbers, they thought it proper for them to chuse a king. They agreed that they ought to confer the crown on the man that was most just; and cast their eyes on one who was equally venerable for his age and his virtue. He would not be present at the assembly. He shut himself up in his house. His heart was overcome with heaviness.

When deputies came to him to inform him of the choice, "God forbid, cries he, I should do so much injury to the Troglodites, as to think there is no

" person among them more just than I am. You
 " tender me the crown, and if you insist upon it, I
 " must accept of it. But assure yourselves I shall die
 " with grief for having seen the Troglodites born free,
 " and now to see them in subjection." At these
 words, he burst out into tears ; " Unhappy day, cri-
 " ed he, why did I live so long ?" He then added in
 a severer tone : " I see, O ye Troglodites, what it
 " is. Your virtue begins to be too heavy for you.
 " In the condition you at this time are, having no
 " head, you must be virtuous in spite of yourselves.
 " You could not otherwise subsist, but would fall in-
 " to the miseries of your fore-fathers. But this yoke
 " seems hard to you. You had rather submit to a
 " prince, and obey his laws, less rigorous than your
 " morals. You know you may then satisfy your am-
 " bition, acquire riches, and languish in vile luxury ;
 " and provided you avoid committing great crimes,
 " you will have no need of virtue." He stopped a
 moment, and his tears flowed faster than ever. " Ah !
 " what would you have me do ? How can I lay my
 " commands on a Troglodite ? Would you that he
 " should do a virtuous action because I command it ?
 " Would he not do it of himself, and from an in-
 " stinct of nature only ? Oh Troglodites, I am at the
 " end of my days. My blood is frozen in my veins.
 " I shall soon see again your pious ancestors. Why
 " would you have me afflict them, why would you
 " oblige me to tell them, that I left you under any
 " other yoke than that of virtue ?

Erzeron, the 10th of the Moon
 Gummadi 2d, 1711.

LETTER XV.

USBEK to MOLLAC-MEHEMET-ALI, guardian of
the three tombs at Com.

WHY dost thou live in the tombs, divine Mollac? Thou art more made for the sojourn of the stars. Thou hidest thyself without doubt for fear of darkening the sun. Thou hast no spots like that star; but, like him, thou art hid in clouds.

Thy science is an abyss more profound than the ocean; thy wit more piercing than Zufager, that sword of Hali, which had two points. Thou knowest what passes in the nine choirs of the celestial powers. Thou readest the Alcoran, on the breast of our divine prophet; and when thou findest any obscure passage, an angel, by his order, expands his rapid wings, and descends from the throne to reveal to thee the secret.

By thy means, I may have an intimate correspondence with the cherubims; for, in fine, thou thirteenth Iman, art not thou the centre where heaven and earth meet, and the point of communication between the abyss and the empyrean?

I am in the middle of a profane people, suffer me to purify myself with thee, suffer me to turn my visage towards the sacred place which thou inhabitest. Distinguish me from the wicked, as the white thread at the rising of Aurora is distinguished from the black. Assist me with thy counsels, take care of my soul, inebriate it with the spirit of the prophets, feed it with the science of paradise, and suffer me to lay its wounds at thy feet. Direct thy

holy letters at Erzeron, where I shall stay some months.

Erzeron, the 11th of the Moon
Gemmadi ad, 1711.

LETTER XVI.

- USEEK to the same.

ICANNOT calm the disorders of my mind, divine Mollac : I have doubts, and they must be satisfied, I find my reason goes astray. Do thou bring it back into the right path. Enlighten me, thou source of light. Fulminate, with thy heavenly pen, the difficulties I am about to propose to thee. Make me pity myself; make me blush at the question I am going to ask.

Why is it that our legislator forbids us the use of swine's flesh, and all meats which he calls unclean? Why are we forbidden to touch a corps, and commanded to wash our bodies continually, in order to purify our souls? Methinks things are not, in themselves, either pure or impure. I cannot conceive any quality inherent to the subject, which can render them such. Dirt seems filthy to us, only because it offends our sight, or some other sense; but it is no more so in itself, than gold or diamonds. The idea of filthiness, contracted by touching a corps, comes only from a certain natural repugnance which we have to it. If the bodies of such, as do not wash themselves, do not offend either the smell or the sight; how could one imagine them to be impure?

The senses, divine Mollac, ought therefore to be the sole judges of the purity or impurity of things. But as objects do not affect all men after the same

manner; so that, which gives an agreeable sensation to one, may produce a distasteful one in another; from whence it follows, that the testimony of sense cannot serve for a rule here, unless we say that every one may decide the point according to his fancy, and distinguish, as far as it relates to himself, things pure, from such as are not so.

But would not this, sacred Mollac, overturn all the distinctions established by our holy prophet, together with the fundamental points of that law, which was written with the finger of an angel?

Erzeron, the 20th of the Moon

Gemmadi 2d, 1711.

L E T T E R XVII.

**MEHMET-ALI, servant of the prophets, to USBEK,
at Erzeron.**

YOU always propose questions to us that have been answered a thousand times already by our holy prophet. Why do not you read the traditions of the doctors? Why do you not go to that pure source of all wisdom? You would there find all your doubts resolved.

Wretch, always perplexed with the vile things of earth, thou hast never with a fixed look beheld those of heaven; and thou reverest the condition of the Mollacs, without daring either to embrace or follow it.

Profane mortals that ye are, who never dive into the secrets of the Eternal; your lights are no better than the thick darkness of the abyss; and the reasonings of your soul are like the dust, which your feet kick up when the sun is in its meridian height in the scorching month of Chahban.

Neither does the Zenith of your minds rise up even to the Nadir of that of the meanest of the * Imaums: your vain philosophy is that flash of lightening which is the fore-runner of tempest and darkness; you are in the midst of the storm, and are tost about with every blast of wind.

It is a very easy matter to solve your difficulty: we need only relate to you what happened one day to our holy prophet, when being tempted by the Christians, and tried by the Jews, he equally confounded both.

The Jew Abdias Ibesalon † asked him why God had forbidden the use of swine's-flesh: "Not without reason," answered the prophet: "it is an unclean beast, and I will convince you thereof." He moulded the shape of a man with some dirt in his hand; he threw it to the ground, and cried, Arise. Immediately a man arose, and said, "I am Japhet the son of Noah." Was thy hair as white when thou departedst this life, said the holy prophet, as it is now? "No, replied he: but when thou awakenedst me, I thought the day of judgment had been come, and the dread of that was so great upon me, that my hair suddenly changed to white."

Well, said the Servant of God, relate to me the whole history of Noah's ark. Japhet obeyed, and gave a particular account of every thing that passed the first months: and then proceeded as follows.

"We flung the ordure of all the animals to one side of the ark, which made it lean so much that way, that we were all in a sad fright about it, e-

* This word is more in use among the Turks than among the Persians.

† A Mahometan tradition.

" specially our wives, who squawled most heartily.
 " Our father Noah, going to take counsel with the
 " Lord, he commanded him to take the elephant,
 " and set him with his head toward the side that
 " leaned. That great animal was so plentiful in his
 " evacuations, that there sprung from them a hog."
 Dost thou not believe, Usbek, that from that very day
 we have abstained from this beast, and looked upon it
 as unclean ?

" But as the hog every day wallowed in the dung,
 " and stirred it about, there arose such a stench in the
 " ark, that he himself could not forbear sneezing;
 " and out of his nose fell a rat, which went about
 " gnawing and nibbling of every thing that came in
 " his way : which grew so insupportable to Noah,
 " that he thought it necessary to consult God once
 " more. He ordered him to give the lion a great
 " knock on the fore-head, who thereupon sneezed
 " too, and from his nose leaped a cat." Dost thou
 not think these animals are unclean also? Answer me.

When therefore thou dost not perceive the reason
 of the impurity of certain things, it is because thou art
 ignorant of many others, and art not informed of
 what hath past between God, the angels, and men.
 Thou knowest nothing of the history of eternity : thou
 hast not read the books penned in heaven : what has
 been revealed to thee is but a very small part of the
 divine library ; and even those, who, like us, are ad-
 mitted something further into it in this life, are still in
 obscurity and darkness. Adieu. Mahomet be in thy
 heart.

Com, the last of the Moon.

Chahban, 1711.

LETTER XVIII.

USBEK to his friend RUSTAN, at Ispahan.

NOT^h

WE sojourned but eight days at Tocat: after a march of five and thirty days, we are now arrived at Smyrna. All the way from Tocat to Smyrna we do not meet with one single town worth notice. I beheld with amazement the weakness of the empire of the Osmanlins: that huge distempered body does not support itself by a mild and temperate regimen; but by violent remedies, which are incessantly corroding and exhausting its strength.

The bashaws, who obtain their employments only by means of their money, enter upon their provinces mere beggars, and fall to plundering of them as if they were conquered places. The insolent soldiery is subject to nothing but his caprice: the towns are dismantled; the cities deserted; the countries laid waste; the manure of the fields, and traffic, entirely neglected.

Impunity reigns in this severe government: the Christians, who cultivate the lands; the Jews, who collect the tributes, are exposed to a thousand violences.

The property in the lands is uncertain, and consequently the desire of improving them slackened: no title, no possession, will hold against the caprice of the governor.

These Barbarians have so far deserted all the arts, that they have neglected even the art military: while the nations of Europe grow more and more knowing every day, they remain in their antient ignorance; and seldom mind to take advantage of their new in-

ventions, till they have been soundly drubbed by means of them a thousand times.

They have no experience at sea, no dexterity at handling the tackle: they say, a poor handful of Christians that issue from a rock * make all the Ottomans tremble, and harrafs their whole empire.

Uncapable of trade themselves, they bear with regret to see the Europeans always laborious and enterprizing, carrying it on for them: they fancy they are mighty gracious to those strangers in allowing them to bring them riches.

In all the vast extent of country which I have traversed, I found only Smyrna that could be reckoned a rich or potent city: it is the Europeans that make it so; and it is no fault of the Turks, that it is not like all the rest.

From hence, my dear Rustan, you may form a just notion of this empire, which in less than two ages will be the stage of some conqueror's triumphs.

Smyrna, 2d of the Moon

Rahmazan, 1711.

L E T T E R XIX.

USBEK to ZACHI his wife, at the seraglio of Ispahan.

YOU have offended me, Zachi; and I feel emotions in my heart which you ought to tremble at, if my remote absence did not allow you time to change your conduct, and appease the violent jealousy with which I am tortured.

I am informed you were caught alone with Nadir the white eunuch, whose life shall be accountable for

* He probably means the knights of Malta.

his infidelity and treachery. How could you forget that it is not lawful for you to admit a white eunuch into your chamber, while you have black ones appointed for your service? It will be in vain to tell me that eunuchs are not men, and that your virtue sets you above all thoughts that might arise in you from the incompleatness of his resemblance. This is sufficient neither for you nor for me: for you, because you do a thing forbidden by the laws of the seraglio: for me, in that you rob me of my honour by exposing yourself to the looks; to the looks! perhaps to the attempts of a villain that may have polluted you by his crimes, and yet more by his repinings, and the despair of his impotence.

You will perhaps allege that you have ever been faithful to me. Was it in your power to be otherwise? How could you deceive the vigilance of those black eunuchs that are so scandalized at the life you lead? How could you break those doors and bolts with which you are secured? You boast of a virtue which is not free: and perhaps your impure wishes have a thousand times robbed you of the merit and value of the fidelity you are so proud of.

I will grant you have not been guilty of all that I have reason to suspect; that the traitor durst not touch you with his sacrilegious hands; that you refused to indulge his eyes with the delights of his master; that, covered with your habit, you left that weak barrier between him and you; nay that he himself, struck with a holy respect, bent his eyes to earth; and, fainting in his rashness, trembled at the thoughts of the punishments he was bringing on himself: tho' all this were true, it is no less so that you have done a thing contrary to your duty: and if you have violated that gratis, without compleating your disorderly wishes, what would you have done to satisfy them? What

would you do if you could get out of that sacred place, which seems a melancholy prison to you, though to your companions it is a happy asylum against the attacks of vice, a holy temple where your sex loses its weakness, and comes to be invincible in spite of all the disadvantages of nature? What would you do if you were left to your own care, and had nothing to defend you but your love to me which is so grievously wounded, and your duty which you have so unworthily betrayed? How sacred are the manners of the country where you live, which takes care to guard you from the attempts of the vilest slaves! You ought to return me a thousand thanks for the confinement I oblige you to live in, since to that only it is owing that you deserve to live at all.

You cannot endure the chief of the eunuchs, because he always keeps a watchful eye upon your conduct, and gives you prudent counsels: his ugliness, you say, is so frightful that you cannot bear to look at him; as if handsome objects were proper in such a post as his. What afflicts you is the not having your white eunuch, who dishonours you, in his room!

But what has your chief slave done? She has told you that the familiarities you take with that young hussy Zelida are not decent; there is the cause of your aversion to her!

I ought, Zachi, to be a stern judge; but instead of that I am a kind husband, that wishes to find you innocent. The love I have for my new wife Roxana, has lessened none of the tenderness I ought to have for you who are no less handsome: I share my love between ye both; and Roxana has no advantage over you, but the addition which virtue gives to beauty.

Smyrna, 11th of the Moon

Zilcade, 1712.

LETTER XX.

USBEK to the CHIEF of the white eunuchs.

YOU ought to tremble as you open this letter, or you should rather have trembled when you allowed of the treachery of Nadir: you that in a cold languishing old age may not without guilt lift your eyes upon the dreadful objects of my love; you who are never allowed to set a sacrilegious foot over the threshold of the tremendous place which shuts them up from all human eyes; you suffer those, whose government you are intrusted with, to do what you durst not presume to do yourself: not discerning the thunder which is just ready to fall upon them and you.

And what are you but wretched tools which I can break at pleasure; who exist but just as long as you obey; who were born only to live under my laws, or to die at my nod; who breathe no longer than my happiness, my love, or even my jealousy, have occasion for such wretches; in short, who have no choice but duty: no soul but my will; no hope but my pleasure?

I know that some of my wives are impatient under the severe laws of their duty; the continual presence of a black eunuch grows irksome to them; they are weary of those hideous objects which are given them to restrain all their thoughts to their husbands: I know all this of them; but you, who are accomplices in these irregularities, you shall be so punished as to strike a terror into all that dare abuse my confidence.

I swear by all the prophets in heaven, and by Hali the greatest of them all, that if you are negligent of

your duty, I will account your lives but as the lives of those insects which I tread out under my feet.

Smyrna, 12th of the Moon

Zilcade, 1712.

LETTER XXI.

USBEK to his friend IBBEN, at Smyrna.

WE are now arrived at Leghorn after forty days sail. It is a new town, a standing mark of the great genius of the dukes of Tuscany, who of a marshy village have made the most flourishing city in Italy.

The women here enjoy very great liberties: they may see the men through certain windows which are called *Jealousies*: they may go abroad every day, guarded only by an old woman or two: they wear but one veil *: their brothers-in-law, their uncles, their nephews may visit them, and the husband is seldom offended at it.

It is a strange sight to a Mahometan when he first takes a view of a Christian city. I do not speak of things that at first strike all beholders, such as the difference of buildings, of habits, of the chief customs: there is in the least trifles something singular, which I feel but cannot express.

To-morrow Rica and I depart for Marseilles; our abode there will not be long: our design is to go directly to Paris, which is the seat of the empire of Europe. Travellers always love great cities, which are a sort of common country for all strangers. Farewell; be assured I shall always love thee.

Leghorn, 12th of the Moon

Saphar, 1712.

* The Persian women wear four.

LETTER XXII.

RICA to IBBEN, at Smyrna.

WE have been this month at Paris, and have hardly been out of motion an hour: it is no small hurry a man must be in before he can get a lodging, find all the people he has directions to, and provide himself with all the necessaries which he must have about him immediately.

Paris is as large as Ispahan: the houses are so high that you would swear they were all built for astrologers. Thou wilt easily judge that a city built in the air, and that has six or seven houses one at the top of the other, must be extremely populous, and that when all the folks are come down into the street, there must be a blessed croud and hurry.

Thou wilt hardly believe it; for this month that I have been here, I have not yet seen any body walk: there is no people under the sun that get so much work out of their machine as the French: they run; they fly: the slow carriages of Asia, the regular step of our camels, would lay them to sleep. As for me, who am not used to this sport, and who often go on foot my old pace, I am sometimes made as mad as a Christian: for not to insist upon my being all splashed from head to foot, I can never forgive the punches of elbows which I receive regularly and periodically: one man, that comes behind me and out-walks me, gives me a whisk half round, and another, that crosses me on the other side, twirls me again in a moment into my right place again; so that in a hundred paces I am more battered and bruised than if I had walked thirty mile.

Do not imagine I can as yet give thee any thorough

description of the manners and customs of these Europeans : I have but a slight notion of them myself, having yet had but just time to wonder.

The king of France is the most potent prince in Europe : he has no gold-mines like his neighbour the king of Spain ; but he has more wealth than he, as he raises it out of the vanity of his subjects, which is more inexhaustible than any mine : he has undertaken and maintained great wars, upon no other fund but the sale of titles of honour : and by a prodigy of human pride, his troops were paid, his places fortified, and his fleets equipped.

Besides, this prince is a great magician : he exercises dominion even over the minds of his subjects : he makes them think just as he would have them : if he has but one million of crowns in his treasury, and stands in need of two, he only bids them believe that one crown is two, and they believe it. If he has a difficult war to support, and has no money at all, he only puts it into their heads that paper is money, and they are presently convinced that it is so : nay, he often makes them believe, that he cures them of all distempers by touching them ; so great is the influence and power which he has over their minds !

What I tell thee of this prince need not surprize thee : there is another magician stronger than he, who is master of his mind no less than he is of the minds of the others. This magician is called the POPE : sometimes he makes him believe that THREE ARE BUT ONE ; that the bread he eats is not bread, or that the wine he drinks is not wine, and a thousand strange things of that nature.

And to keep him always in breath, and for fear he should lose his faculty of believing, he from time to time gives him certain articles of faith to exercise himself upon. About two years ago he sent him a

long scroll which he called CONSTITUTION ; and would needs oblige this prince and all his subjects to believe every thing therein contained, upon heavy penalties. The prince he prevailed upon ; he swallowed it at once, and set his subjects an example : but some of them proved resty, and declared they would believe nothing at all of what was contained in that same scroll : the women were the mothers of this rebellion, which divides all the court, the whole kingdom, and every family. This constitution forbids their sex the reading of a book, which all the Christians say was brought down from heaven : properly speaking, it is their Alcoran. The women, provoked at the affront done to their sex in this order, set up their throats one and all against the constitution : they got the men on their side, who are not very zealous for any particular privilege in this respect. And yet we must confess this Mufti does not reason amiss ; and, by the great Hali, I believe he is instructed in the principles of our holy law : for since the women are of a creation inferior to ours, and our prophets tell us they shall not enter into paradise, why should they trouble their heads about reading a book, which was wrote only to shew the way to that place of happiness ?

I have heard some things related of this king which sound miraculous ; and I doubt not but thou wilt be very backward to believe them.

They say, that while he was making war with his neighbours, who were all in league against him, he had an infinite number of invisible enemies about him in the very heart of his own kingdom : they add, that he sought them out for above thirty years, and that yet notwithstanding the indefatigable pains of some dervises who have his ear, he could never find so much as one of them ; they live with him ; they are at his

court, in his capital, in his troops, in his tribunals; and yet they say he will have the vexation to die without discovering them: one would think they exist in general, but are no longer any thing in particular; a body but no members. Doubtless heaven intends to punish this prince for not having been moderate enough towards the enemies he conquered, by raising up invisible ones against him, whose genius and destiny are above his own.

I shall continue to write to thee, and shall inform thee of things quite foreign to the Persian character and way of thinking: it is indeed the same earth we tread upon; but the men of the country where I live, and those of the country where thou art, are men of a quite different mould.

Paris, the 4th of the Moon
Rebiab ad, 1712.

LETTER XXIII.

USBEK to IBBEN, at Smyrna.

I Have received a letter from thy nephew Rhedi: he sends me word he is leaving Smyrna, with design to visit Italy; and that the sole bent of his voyage is to gather instruction, and thereby make himself more worthy of thee. I congratulate thee upon having a nephew, who shall in time be the comfort of thy old age.

Rica writes thee a long letter; he tells me that he sends thee a full account of this country: his lively genius catches every thing immediately: as for me, who think more slowly, I can yet say little to thee about it.

Thou art the subject of our most tender conversa-

tions: we are never weary of recalling to mind the handsom reception thou gaveſt us at Smyrna, and the services thy friendship is continually doing for us. Generous Ibben, mayeft thou always meet with friends as full of gratitude and fidelity as we are!

Heaven grant that I may quickly ſee thee again, and enjoy once more those happy days which ſlide away ſo pleasantly between two friends! Adieu.

Paris, the 4th of the Moon
Rebiab 2d, 1712.

LETTER XXIV.

USBEK to ROXANA, at the seraglio of Iſpahan.

HOW happy are you, Roxana, in being in the sweet country of Persia, and not in these poifonous climates, where moideſty and virtue are unknown! How happy are you! You live in my seraglio as in the habitation of innocence, ſafe from the attempts of all mankind: with pleasure you reſiect that it is out of your power to go aſtray: never did man pollute you with his wanton looks: your father-in-law himſelf, even in the liberty of festivals, never ſaw your charming mouth: you never failed to put on a holy covering to hide it. Happy Roxana! whenever you went into the country, you always have had eunuchs to march before you, and give death to thoſe rafh mortals that did not fly your fighit: even I myſelf, on whom heaven beſtored you to make me happy, how much pains did it coſt me to make myſelf master of that treaſure which you guarded with ſo much conſtancy! What torment was it to me in the firſt days of our marriage not to ſee you! What impatience,

when I had seen you ! yet you would not satisfy it ; nay, you enflamed it by obstinate refusals of frightened virtue : you made no difference between me and those men from whom you always hide yourself. Do you remember that day when I lost you among your slaves, who concealed you from my strict inquiry ? Do you call to mind that other, when finding your tears of no effect, you employed your mother's authority to restrain the fury of my love ? Do you remember, when all other helps failed you, the assistance you borrowed from your courage ? You drew your poignard, and threatened to sacrifice a husband that loved you, if he continued to exact from you what you valued above your husband himself ! two months past in this struggle between love and virtue : you carried your chaste scruples too far : you did not yield even when you were conquered ; you defended an expiring virginity to the utmost extremity : you looked upon me as an enemy, that had done you an injury, and not as an husband that had been fond of you : it was above three months before you could look at me without blushing : your perpetual confusion seemed to upbraid me with the advantage I had taken ; nor was my possession quiet : you robbed me of as many of those charms and beauties as ever you could ; and I was intoxicated with the greatest favours before I had obtained the least.

If you had been educated in this country, you would not have been under so much confusion : the women here have lost all shame : they appear before the men with their faces uncovered, as if they challenged them to their defeat : they meet their eyes : they see them in their mosques, their public walks, and even in their own apartments ; the custom of being attended by eunuchs is unknown to them : instead of that noble simplicity, and lovely bashfulness,

which reigns among us, we here see a brutish impudence which it is impossible to accustom one's self to.

Yes, Roxana, if you were here, you would be perfectly enraged with the horrid shamelessness your sex is fallen into: you would fly the abominable place, and pant after that sweet retirement where you find nothing but innocence; where you are sure of yourself; where no danger alarms you; in a word, where you can love me, without fearing that you shall ever depart from the love you owe me.

When you heighten the loveliness of your complexion with the finest colours; when you perfume your whole body with the most precious essences; when you deck yourself with your richest ornaments; when you strive to distinguish yourself above your companions by the gracefulness of the dance, or melody of voice; when you enter into a gentle contention with them for superiority of beauty, good-humour and gaiety, I cannot imagine you have any other end but to please me; and when I see you blush modestly, when your eye looks for mine, when you insinuate yourself into my heart with soft alluring words, I cannot doubt, Roxana, of the truth of your love.

But what shall we say of the European women? the art they use to beautify their complexions, the ornaments they deck themselves with, the care they take of their persons, their continual desire of pleasing, are so many blemishes in their virtue, and wrongs to their husband.

Not, Roxana, that I believe they carry their immodesty so far, as such conduct might make one imagine; or that they proceed to that horrible excess of debauchery dreadful to name, an absolute violation of the conjugal faith: there are very few women so abandoned as to carry their guilt to that height: they

all wear in their hearts an impression of virtue originally stamped upon them by their birth, which education may a little deface, but never wholly obliterate: they may excuse themselves from the exterior duties which modesty requires; but when it comes to the last push, nature starts back. So when we lock you up so cautiously; when we keep you under the guard of so many slaves; when we check your desires from flying out too far; it is not that we apprehend the least infidelity from you, but it is because we know your purity cannot be too great, and that the least stain pollutes it.

I pity you, Roxana: your chastity, so long proved, deserved a husband that should never have left you, and that might himself have quelled those desires which your virtue alone can subdue.

Paris, the 7th of the Moon

Regeb, 1712.

L E T T E R XXV.

USBEK to NESSIR, at Ispahan.

WE are now at Paris, the proud rival of the city of the sun *. When I departed from Smyrna, I desired my friend Ibben to send thee a box wherein were some presents for thee: thou wilt receive this letter by the same conveyance. Though at so remote a distance from him as five or six hundred leagues, I write to him, and hear from him, as easily as if he were at Ispahan, and I at Com. I send my letters to Marseilles; from whence ships are continually going to Smyrna: from thence he sends those that are di-

* Ispahan.

rected for Persia by the Armenian caravans, which set out daily for Ispahan.

Rica enjoys a perfect state of health: the strength of his constitution, his youth, and his natural gaiety, secure him against all dangers.

For my part, I am not so well; both my body and mind are dejected; I give myself up to reflections that grow every day more and more melancholy: my decaying health turns me towards my country, and makes these regions yet more foreign to me.

But, my dear Nessir, I conjure thee let not my wives be made acquainted with my condition; if they love me, I would spare their tears; and if they do not, I would not add to their boldness.

If my eunuchs thought me in danger, if they could any ways hope for an impunity for their base complaisance, they would quickly cease to be deaf to the flattering voice of that deceitful sex, which melts the rocks, and works upon things inanimate.

Adieu, Nessir. I take pleasure in giving thee proofs of my confidence.

Paris, the 5th of the Moon,
Chahban, 1712.

L E T T E R XXVI.

RICA to ***

I Yesterday saw a very odd thing, though it is done every day at Paris.

About evening all the people get together to go and act a kind of mimicry, which I heard them call a play: the chief part of the performance is upon a scaffold, which they call the stage: on both sides of it are little nests which they call boxes, where men

and women act silent scenes together, almost like those we have in Persia.

Sometimes you see an amorous lady that looks languishing upon account of her neglected passion : then another with sparkling eyes, and an eager look, perfectly devours her lover with her regards, which he returns as ardently : all the passions are painted in their faces, and expressed with an eloquence which is the more lively for being dumb. There the actresses shew but half their bodies, and generally wear a muff¹ out of modesty to conceal their arms. Underneath is a great company of people standing, who laugh at those who are aloft upon the stage, and these latter laugh at those below in their turn.

But those, that take most pains, are some young folks, who are in a continual exercise : they are obliged to be every where ; they go by passages, which none but themselves are acquainted with ; they run up with amazing activity from story to story : they are above, below, in all the boxes ; they in a manner dive ; you lose sight of them ; in a moment, whip, there they are again : oftentimes they quit the place of the scene, and go act in another : there are others of them, who, though they use a small crutch, walk and go about like the rest. At last you come to some rooms where they play a private comedy : they begin with low bows ; they proceed to embraces : they say the slightest acquaintance gives one man a title to squeeze another's breath out of his body : the place seems to inspire tenderness : and indeed they say the princesses that reign there are not cruel ; and excepting two or three hours in a day, in which they are stern enough, they are very tractable at all other times, and the other is a kind of drunkenness which they are easily cured of.

All that I have been giving thee an account of, is transacted much after the same manner in another place called the OPERA-HOUSE : the whole difference is, that in one they sing, and speak in the other. One of my friends carried me the other day into the place where one of the chief actresses was undressing : we grew so well acquainted, that next day I received the following letter from her.

SIR,

I am the most unhappy woman upon the face of the earth. I was always the most virtuous actress in the whole opera : about seven or eight months ago I was in the tiring room, where you saw me yesterday ; as I was dressing myself for a priestess of Diana, a young Abbe came in, and without respect to my white habit, my veil, or my frontlet, robbed me of my innocence : in vain I now exaggerate the sacrifice I made to him ; he only laughs at me, and avers he had to do only with a very prophane woman : mean while I am so big that I dare not come upon the stage any more ; for I have a most inconceivable delicacy in point of honour, and will affirm, that a woman who has any sence of reputation, will much sooner part with her virtue than her modesty : with this delicacy of mine, you may be sure the young Abbe would never have succeeded, if he had not promised me marriage : a motive so honourable made me dispense with the little common formalities, and begin where I ought to have ended : but since his treachery has dishonoured me, I am resolved to live no longer at the opera, where, between you and I, they hardly given me enough to live upon ; for now that I advance in years, and go backward in beauty, my salary, though still the

PERSIAN LETTERS. 51

same, seems to lessen every day. I was informed, by one of your attendants, that they infinitely esteem a good dancer in your country, and that if I were at Ispahan, my fortune would be made out of hand. If you would grant me your protection, and carry me with you into that country, you would do a piece of service to a woman, who, by virtue and good conduct, would not appear unworthy your goodness. I am, etc.

Paris, 12th of the Moon

Chalval, 1752.

LETTER XXVII.

RICA to IBBEN, at Smyrna.

THE Pope is the head of the Christians : this is an old idol, whom they worship upon prescription. He was antiently formidable even to princes themselves ; for he deposed them as easily, as our magnificent sultans depose the kings of Irmetta and Georgia : but no-body fears him now. He calls himself the successor of one of the first Christians, named St Peter : and it was certainly a very rich succession which he left him ; for he is master of immense treasure, and has a very great country under his dominion.

The bishops are men of the law, who are subordinate to him, and have two very different functions under his authority. When they are assembled together, they make articles of faith as well as himself : when they are separate, they have nothing to do but to give people dispensations from obeying the law. For thou must know, the Christian religion is encumbered with a vast many very difficult practices :

and as it was not thought half so easy to fulfil those duties, as to have bishops that should give permission to let them alone ; they chose this latter course for the public benefit. So that if they do not care for keeping the * Rhamazan ; if they have no stomach for the formalities of marriage ; if they would break a vow ; if they marry contrary to the regulations of the law ; nay, sometimes, if they have a fancy not to keep an oath, or so, they go to the bishop, or the pope, who immediately grants them a dispensation.

The bishops do not make articles of faith of their own mere motion : there is an infinite number of doctors, most of them dervises, who start a thousand new questions in religion among themselves : they are left to dispute a long while with one another ; and the war holds till a decision comes and puts an end to it.

And accordingly I can assure thee there never was a kingdom that had so many civil wars in it, as that of Christ.

Those who publish any new propositions are at first called heretics. Every heresy has its name, which is a sort of a nick-name for all concerned in it : but any of them may chuse whether they will be heretics or no : for it is but dividing the difference in the middle, and giving those that accuse them of heresy a distinction ; and let this distinction be what it will, intelligible, or not intelligible, it makes a man as white as snow, and he may call himself orthodox.

This that I tell you falls out well for France and Germany ; for I have heard that in Spain and Italy, there is a set of dervises that will not be jested with, but will burn a man as they would burn straw. When any man falls into the hands of those folks, happy is his lot if he has always said his prayers with little

* Lent.

wooden beads in his hand ; or has always carried about him two pieces of cloth tied to two ribbons ; or has ever been in a province called Gallicia : without these things the poor dog is in a pitiful case : if he swears like any Pagan, that he is an orthodox Christian, it is ten to one they do not agree upon the terms, but burn him for a heretic : in vain he offers his distinction : they will not trouble their heads about distinctions : and he is ashes before they will ever examine whether there is any thing in it or no.

Other judges usually presume the person accused to be innocent : these always take it for granted, that he is guilty : and whenever there is any doubt in the case, they lay it down to themselves for a rule to incline to severity : probably this may arise from the ill opinion they have of mankind ; but, on the other hand, they have so good a one of them, that they never think them capable of telling a lye ; for they will receive the evidence of mortal enemies, women of bad repute, and fellows of an infamous profession. In their sentence, they pay a small compliment to those whom they dress in a fiery shirt ; they tell them they are very sorry to see them in such a scurvy dress ; that for their parts they are merciful and abhor blood, and are grieved at heart that they have condemned them : but to comfort themselves, poor men, they confiscate all the effects of the miserable wretches to their own coffers.

Happy the land which is inhabited by the children of the prophets : these mournful spectacles are there unknown : the holy religion, brought down to them by angels, defends itself by the mere force of truth, and has no need of these violent methods for its support.

Paris; the 12th of the Moon.

Chalval, 1712.

LETTER XXVIII.

RICA to the same, at Smyrna.

THE inhabitants of Paris have a spirit of curiosity in them, that is perfectly extravagant. When I arrived here, I was stared at as if I had dropped from heaven : old and young, men, women and children, all must have a sight of me : if I went abroad, every body got to their windows : if I walked in the Tuilleries, immediately a circle was formed round me : the women made a rainbow about me, varied with a thousand colours. If I went to the public shows, presently a hundred spying-glasses were levelled at my strange figure : in short, never was man so much seen as I was. I sometimes smiled to hear people, that had hardly ever stirred out of their chamber, whisper to one another ; it must be confessed, his air is truly Persian. And which is most wonderful, I found pictures of me wherever I went. I saw myself multiplied in every shop, upon every chimney ; so fearful were they that they should not see me enough.

Yet all these honours are but burdensom. I did not imagine myself to be any thing so curious, or so extraordinary : and though I have a very good opinion of myself, I never dreamed I should have disturbed the peace of a great city where no-body knew me. This made me resolve to lay aside my Persian habit, and put on an European dress, to find whether any thing so admirable would remain in my countenance. This trial brought me to a true knowledge of myself : when stripped of my foreign ornaments, I saw myself prized at my true rate : I had great reason to be angry with my taylor for making

me loose, in a moment, all the public esteem and consideration : for I at once sunk into a most terrible nothingness : I sometimes sat an hour together in company, without being lookt at, or having occasion given me to open my mouth : but if any body by chance dropt a word that I was a Persian, in a instant there was a buz about my ears : Ha, ha ! the gentleman a Persian ! Strange ! That any body should be a Persian !

Paris, the 6th of the Moon
Chalval, 1712.

LETTER XXIX.

RHEDI to USBEK, at Paris.

I AM now at Venice, my dear Usbek ; one may have seen all the cities in the world, and yet be surprized at the sight of Venice : it will always be matter of wonder to see a great town, lofty spires and mosques, rising out of the water, and to find a people without number in a place where one would expect nothing but fishes.

But this profane city is destitute of the most precious treasure in the world ; I mean, fresh running water ; it is impossible here to accomplish one single legal ablution. This city is held in abomination by our holy prophet ; and he never looks down upon it from his lofty seat in heaven without rage.

Were it not for this, my dear Usbek, I should be charmed to live in a city where my mind improves every day ; I inform myself in the secrets of trade, in the interests of princes, in the form of their government : I do not neglect even the European superstitions ; I apply myself to physic, natural philo-

sophy, astronomy: I study the arts: in a word, I wade out of the clouds, which darkened my sight in the country of my birth.

Venice, 16th of the Moon
Chalval, 1712.

LETTER XXX.

RICA to ***

I WENT the other day to see a † house where about three hundred people are maintained, poorly enough: I had soon satisfied my curiosity; for neither the church, nor the buildings, deserve much notice. The poor folks in this house were wondrous merry: several of them were playing at cards, or other games, which I knew nothing of. As I went out, one of the men was going out too, and hearing me ask which was the way to the Marais, which is the furthest part of all Paris; I am going thither, says he, and will conduct you; follow me. He led me to my heart's content, extricated me out of all crouds, and saved me dextrously from carts and coaches: we were just come to the end of our journey, when being curious no know what my guide was; My good friend, said I to him, may not I know who you are? I am a blind man, Sir, answered he. What, said I, blind? And why did not you desire the honest man that was playing at cards with you, to be our guide? He is blind too, replied he: for these four hundred years there have been three hundred blind folks of us in that house where you found me: but I must leave you; this is the street you en-

* The hospital of Quinze Vingts.

quired for : I must mix with the croud, and enter into that church, where I dare swear I shall hinder other people more than they will me.

Paris, the 17th of the Moon.
Chalval, 1712.

LETTER XXXI.

USBEK to RHEDI, at Venice.

WINE is so dear at Paris, by reason of the duties it is charged with, that one would think the design was to make the people obey the precept of the divine Alcoran, which forbids the use of it.

When I meditate upon the fatal effects of this liquor, I cannot help looking upon it as the most dreadful present that ever nature made to man. If any thing ever stained the lives and reputations of our monarchs, it was their intemperance ; it is the most envenomed spring of all their injustice and cruelty. I will speak it to the shame of mankind : the law forbids our princes the use of wine, and they drink it to an excess that degrades them even from their humanity. On the contrary, the Christian princes are allowed it, and it is never observed to lead them into any irregularities. The mind of man is made up of contradictions : in the licentiousness of a debauch they rebel against all precepts with a kind of fury ; and the law, designed to make us just, often serves only to make us more criminal.

But when I disapprove the use of this liquor, which deprives man of his reason ; I do not in like manner condemn those beverages which clear and comfort it. It is the wisdom of the orientals to seek remedies against melancholy as much as against the

most dangerous distempers. When any misfortune befalls an European, he has no other refuge but to read a philosopher called Seneca: but the Asiatics, much more prudent, and in this particular better naturalists, use a drink capable of making the heart of man glad, and charming away the remembrance of his afflictions.

Nothing can be more gloomy than the consolations drawn from the necessity of evil, the ineffectualness of remedies, the irreversibleness of fate, the decrees of providence, and the wretchedness of the state of man: it is ridiculous to go about to soften the misfortune by the consideration that man is born to misery: it is much better to lift the mind out of its reflections, and to manage the man rather as a creature endued with reason.

The soul, while united with the body, is continually tyrannized over by it: if the motion of the blood is too slow; if the spirits are not enough purified; if they are not in sufficient quantity, we fall into dejection and sorrow: but if we take some beverage capable of altering this disposition of the body; our soul again becomes capable of receiving gay impressions, and takes a secret delight in perceiving its machine resume, as it were, fresh life and motion.

Paris, the 25th of the Moon
Zileade, 1713.

LETTER XXXII.

RICA to IBBEN, at Smyrna:

THE women of Persia are finer women than those of France; but those of France are prettier: it is impossible not to love the former, and not to be

delighted with the latter: the first having more of tenderness and modesty, the second more of gaiety and sprightliness.

What makes the blood so rich and florid in Persia, is the regular life the women lead; they neither game, nor sit up a-nights; they drink no wine, and never are exposed to the weather: I must confess, the seraglio is calculated rather for health than pleasure: it is a flat, uniform, still life, without any spirit in it to quicken it; every thing there favours of subordination and duty; delight itself is there grave, and mirth severe, and are hardly ever tasted otherwise than as tokens of authority and dependence.

Neither have the men in Persia the same gaiety as the French have: they discover none of that freedom of mind, that satisfied air, which I here find in all degrees and conditions of life.

It is much worse in Turkey. There you may find families, wherein, from father to son, no one has laughed since the foundation of the monarchy.

This gravity of the Asiatics proceeds from the little conversation they have with each other: they never see one another, but when forced to it by some ceremony: friendship, that pleasing engagement of the heart, which here makes up the sweetness of life, is to them almost unknown; they retire into their houses, where they always find a certain company that waits for them; so that every individual family stands, as it were, an island by itself.

Discoursing one day upon this subject with a man of this country, says he to me: what I think most amiss in your manners, is your being obliged to live as you do with slaves, whose minds and inclinations always have a relish of the meanness of their condition. These rascally sort of people weaken in you the sentiments of virtue which you derive from

nature, and hinder their growth from your very infancy that they beset you : for, in fine, shake but off your prejudices, and what can you expect from an education, that is received from the hands of a wretch, who places his whole merit in being goaler to another man's wives, and is proud of the vilest employment that mankind is capable of ? who is despicable for that very fidelity which is his only virtue ; being prompted thereto by envy, jealousy, and despair ; who burning with desire to revenge himself of both sexes, being the out cast of both, is content to be tyrannized over by the strongest, provided that he may but afflict the weakest ; who, deriving from his ugliness and deformity, the whole lustre of his condition, is only esteemed because he is unworthy to be so ; who, in short, riveted for ever to the gate where his station is, and harder than the very hinges and bolts that fasten it, values himself upon a fifty years exercise of that scandalous office, where, taking charge of his master's jealousy, he lets loose his utmost barbarity.

Paris, the 14th of the Moon.

Zilhage, 1713.

L E T T E R XXXIII.

USBEK to GEMCHID his cousin : a dervise of the shining monastery of Tauris.

WHAT thinkest thou of the Christians, sublime dervise ? Believest thou at the day of judgement they shall be like the infidel Turks, who shall serve the Jews for asses, and shall be rid by them a good round trot to hell ? I am well assured they

shall not go to the abode of the prophets ; and that the great Hali was not sent for their sakes. But because they have not been so happy as to find mosques in their country, dost thou think that they will be condemned to eternal punishments, and that God will chastise them for not practising a religion which he did not make known to them ? I tell thee I have often examined these Christians ; I have questioned them, to see if they had any notion of the great Hali, who was the fairest of men, and I have found that they never so much as heard of him.

They do not in the least resemble those infidels, whom our holy prophets put to the sword, because they refused to believe in the miracles of heaven : they are rather like those unhappy ones who dwelt in the thick darkness of idolatry, before the divine light shone forth on the countenance of our great prophet.

Again, if you sift narrowly into their religion, you will find a sprinkling of our doctrines. I have often admired the secret ways of providence, who seems thereby inclined to prepare them for the general conversion. I have heard talk of a book written by one of their doctors, intitled, **POLIGAMY TRIUMPHANT**, wherein it is proved that the Christians are enjoined polygamy. Their baptism is an image of our legal ablutions, and the Christians are only mistaken in the efficacy they ascribe to that first ablution, which they believe ought to suffice for all the rest. Their priests and their monks pray, as we do, seven times a day : they hope to enjoy a paradise, where they shall taste a thousand delights, by means of the resurrection of bodies : they have, like us, set fasts and mortifications, with which they hope to work upon the divine mercy : they worship good angels, and are afraid of bad ones : they have a holy

62 PERSIAN LETTERS.

credulity for miracles, which God works by the ministry of his servants: they own, as we do, the insufficiency of their own merits, and that they stand in need of an intercessor with God. Though I do not find Mahomet among them, I every where meet with Mahometism. Do all we can, truth will prevail, and break through the cloud that surrounds her. A day will come when the Eternal will see nothing upon the earth but true believers. Time, which consumes every thing, will even destroy error itself. All men will with astonishment behold themselves under the same banner. Every thing will be at an end, not excepting the law itself. The divine books will be taken up from earth, and conveyed among the celestial archieves.

Paris, the 20th of the Moon

Zilhage, 1713.

LETTER XXXIV.

USBEK to RHEDI, at Venice.

COFFEE is very much in use at Paris: there are multitudes of public-houses where they distribute it. In some of these houses they talk news, in others they play at draughts: there is one of them where the coffee is prepared in such a manner as to infuse wit into those that drink it: at least there is not one but believes he has four times more wit, when he goes out, than when he came in.

But what I cannot approve of is, that these wits are of no manner of use to their country, and do nothing but amuse their talents upon boyish subjects: for example, when first I came to Paris, I found them very hot upon one of the slenderest subjects that

could be imagined; it was concerning the reputation of an old Greek poet, the place of whose birth, as well as the time of his death, has been unknown for above two thousand years.

Both parties owned that he was an excellent poet: the only question was, whether he had more or less merit ascribed to him than he deserved. Each was for settling the rates; but amongst these assizors of reputation, some made better weight than the others; the dispute was very sharp; they so cordially abused each other, and were so very bitter in their raillery, that I no less wondered at the manner of their disputing than at the matter of the dispute. If any one, said I to myself, were so fool-hardy in the presence of one of these defenders of the Greek poets, to fall foul on the reputation of some honest citizen, how would he be reprimanded! sure this nice zeal for the reputation of the dead, would be hot indeed for that of the living! Be that as it will, added I, God keep me from ever bringing upon my head the enmity of the censors of this poet; who, though he has been in his grave these two thousand years, cannot yet escape so implacable an hatred! They do but beat the air now: what would they do, were they animated by the presence of an enemy?

These, I have been speaking of, dispute in the vulgar tongue, and are to be distinguished from another sort of disputants, who make use of a barbarous language, which seems to add something to the rage and obstinacy of the combatants. There are certain parts of the town where this sort of people are at it, helter skelter, night and day; they feed upon distinctions; they subsist upon obscure reasonings and false consequences: this trade, which one would think would hardly find a man in bread, does not fail to turn to account: there has been seen a whole nation,

expelled out of their own country, cross the seas to come and settle in France, bringing nothing along with them to ward off the necessities of life, but a formidable talent for disputation. Adieu,

Paris, the last of the Moon,

Zilhage, 1713.

L E T T E R XXXV.

USBEK to IBBEN, at Smyrna.

THE king of France is old: we have not in our histories one example of a Persian monarch that has reigned near so long. He is said to possess to a very high degree the talent of causing himself to be obeyed: he governs with the same genius his family, his court, his kingdom: he has been often heard to say, that of all the governments in the world, that of the Turks, or that of our august sultan, would please him best; so great a value does he set upon the oriental politics.

I have studied his character, and have found therein contradictions which it is impossible for me to reconcile: for example, he has a minister not above eighteen years old; and a mistress that is turned of fourscore: he dotes on his religion, and yet cannot endure such as assert that it ought to be rigidly practised: though he shuns the tumult of cities, and communicates himself but little, yet he is taken up from morning till night upon means how he may give occasion to be talked of: he loves trophies and victories; but is as fearful of seeing a good general at the head of his own troops, as he would have reason to dread one at the head of his enemies: no prince but himself, as I find, was ever at the same

time richer than a prince could wish to be ; and poorer than a private person could possibly bear to be.

He loves to gratify such as serve him ; but then he as liberally rewards the assiduities, or rather the idleness, of his courtiers, as the laborious campaigns of his generals : he oftentimes prefers a man that undresses him, or gives him a napkin when he sits down to table, before another who takes him towns or wins him battles. He thinks that the supreme grandeur ought not to be confined in the distribution of favours : and without examining whether the person, whom he bestows his bounty upon, is really a man of merit, he thinks his choice of him makes him so : and accordingly he has been known to bestow a small pension upon a man that fled from the enemy two leagues, and a fine government upon another that fled four.

He is magnificent, principally in his buildings : there are more statues in the gardens of his palace, than there are inhabitants in a large city : his guard is as strong as that of the prince before whom all the thrones of the earth truckle, and are reduced to dust : his armies are as numerous, his supplies as endless, and his exchequer as inexhaustible..

Paris, the 7th of the Moon.

Mahâram, 1713.

LETTER XXXVI.

RICA to IBBEN, at Smyrna.

IT is a great question among men, whether it is better to deprive women of liberty, or to allow it them. In my mind, there is much to be said on both sides. If the Europeans will have it to be un-

generous to make those unhappy whom we love ; our Asiatics answer, that it is an argument of a poor spirit for men to renounce the empire which nature has bestowed on them over the women. If they are told, that a great number of women shut up are very troublesome ; they answer, that ten women that are obedient are less troublesome than one that is not. Now if in their turn they object that the Europeans cannot be happy with women that are not faithful to them ; our answer is, that this same fidelity, so much boasted of, does not hinder the disgust which always follows a gratified passion ; that our women are too much ours ; that so calm a possession leaves us nothing to wish or fear ; that a little coquetry is, as it were, the salt, which not only gives the relish, but prevents corruption. Perhaps a wiser man than myself would be at a loss how to decide this question : for if the Asiatics do very well to look out for means to calm their inquietudes ; the Europeans are as much in the right, to have no inquietudes at all.

After all, say they, though we were unhappy in quality of husbands, we should still find means to make ourselves amends, in quality of lovers.

No man can, with reason, complain of the infidelity of his wife, unless there were but three persons in the world ; they will be quits, so long as there are four.

There is another great question, namely, whether by the law of nature the women are subject to the men. No certainly, said a very gallant philosopher to me the other day, Nature never dictated any such law : the empire we assume over them is down-right tyranny, which they let us exercise, only because they have more good-nature than we, and consequently more humanity and reason : these very advantages, which, doubtless, ought to give them the

superiority, had we been rational, have lost it them, because we are otherwise.

Now, if it be true that the power we have over the women is merely tyrannical ; it is no less true, that they have over us an empire natural ; that of beauty, which nothing can resist. Our authority extends not to all countries ; whereas that of beauty is universal : whereof then do we claim a pre-eminence ? Is it because we are stronger than they ? but herein is a manifest injustice ; we employ all manner of means to break their spirits : they would be equally vigorous, were their education equal to ours : try them in the talents, which education has not enervated ; and you will see whether they are weaker than us.

This must be confessed, though it is contrary to our custom ; among the most civilized nations, women always had the authority over their husbands : it was established by a law among the Egyptians, in honour of Isis, and among the Babylonians, in honour of Semiramis. It is said of the Romans, that they commanded all nations, but obeyed their wives. I take no notice of the Sarmatians, who were really slaves to the sex ; they were too much Barbarians to be quoted for an example.

Thou seest, my dear Ibben, that I have imbibed the taste of this country, wherein they love to maintain extraordinary opinions, and to reduce every thing to a paradox. The prophet has decided the question, and has adjusted the rights of both sexes : the wives, says he, ought to honour their husbands, and the husbands their wives ; but the husbands have the advantage to be one degree above their wives.

Paris, 26th of the Moon

Gemmandi 2d, 1713.

LETTER XXXVIII.

* HADGI IBBI to the Jew, BEN JOSHUA, a Mahometan proselyte, at Smyrna.

IT seems to me, Ben Joshua, that the birth of extraordinary personages is always ushered in with some stupendous signs and appearances; as if nature suffered a sort of crisis, and the celestial power could not bring forth without the pangs of a child-birth.

Nothing is so marvellous as the birth of Mahomet, God, who by the decrees of his providence, had resolved from the very beginning to send to mankind this mighty prophet, to chain up Satan, created a light two thousand years before Adam, which passing from elect to elect, from one ancestor to another ancestor of Mahomet, at length descended to him, as an authentic testimony of his being sprung from the patriarchs.

It was therefore for the sake of this same prophet, that God willed not that any child should be conceived, till the nature of woman should cease to be unclean, and the virile instrument was delivered up to circumcision.

He came into the world circumcised; and joy was seen upon his countenance at the very instant of his birth: thrice did the earth tremble, as if she herself had been in labour: all the idols fell flat on their faces: the thrones of kings were overturned: Lucifer was hurled down to the bottom of the sea, and swam therein for forty days before he emerged from the deep abyss: after which he fled to mount Cabes, from whence, with a terrible voice, he called upon the angels.

* Hadgi is one that has been in pilgrimage at Meeca.

That very night did God set a bounder-mark between man and woman, which neither of them could pass over : the art of the magicians and necromancers found itself bereft of virtue : a voice was heard from heaven, saying these words ; " I have sent to the world my faithful friend."

According to the testimony of Isben Aben, the Arabian historian, the generation of birds, clouds, winds, and all the squadron of angels assembled themselves to breed up this child, and there was great contention among them who should have the honour of it. The birds said, warbling, that they ought to have the fostering of him, because they could more easily bring together the various fruits of different climates. The winds murmured, and said, it rather belongs to us, because we convey to him the most agreeable odours from all parts. No, said the clouds, the care of him ought to be committed to us, because we will every instant impart to him the refreshing coolness of the waters. Upon which the angels cried out, indignant : What will there remain for us to do ? But a voice was heard from heaven, which put an end to all disputes : he shall not be taken out of the hands of mortals ; because happy the breasts that shall give him suck ; the hands that shall touch him ; the roof he shall dwell under, and the bed he shall repose on !

After so many flagrant testimonials, my dear Joshua, a man must have a heart of steel not to believe his holy law. What could heaven do more to prove his divine mission, unless nature itself had been overturned, and mankind, who were to be convinced, had been destroyed ?

X

Paris, the 20th of the Moon
Rhegeb, 1713.

LETTER XXXVIII.

USBEK to IBBEN, at Smyrna.

AS soon as a great man is dead, they meet here in a mosque, and make his funeral oration; that is, a discourse in his praise: with which, after all, a man would be puzzled to decide exactly whether the deceased had a great deal of merit, or none at all.

I would have these funeral ostentations banished: men should be bewailed at their birth, and not at their death. What avail the ceremonies and mournful formalities about a sick man in his last moments: his family weeping, his friends grieving, but only to exaggerate the loss he is going to suffer, and make him the lother to depart?

We are so blind that we know not when we are to mourn, or when we are to rejoice: we have hardly ever any thing besides fictitious sadness, or fictitious mirth.

When I see the subjects of the Mogul running in crowds once a year, to behold their king putting himself in a balance, and causing himself to be weighed like an ox; when I see them rejoicing at their prince's being grown more corpulent, that is to say, less capable of governing them; I cannot help pitying the extravagance of the mind of man.

Paris, 20th of the Moon,
Rhegeb, 1713.

LETTER XXXIX.

The Chief of the black eunuchs to USBEK.

I SMAEL, one of the black eunuchs, magnificent lord, is just now dead, and I thought it incumbent upon me to fill up his place. Eunuchs being at present extremely scarce, I had thoughts of making use of a black slave which thou hast in the country : but as yet I have not been able to prevail upon him to suffer himself to be consecrated into this employment. Considering with myself, that in the main it was for his own good, I resolved the other day to use a little rigour towards him; and so, in conjunction with the intendant of thy gardens, I ordered him, in his own despite, to be put into a condition of rendering to thee services with which thy heart is most delighted, and to live as I do within these tremendous walls, which he dares not so much as look upon. But he set up his throat as if we had been a-going to skin him ; and was so very mutinous, and made such resistance, that he got away from us, and escaped the fatal knife. I have just now been informed, that he intends to write unto thee, to ask thy excuse, affirming that I conceived this design purely to revenge myself on him, for his saying certain sharp things concerning me. I swear by the hundred thousand prophets, that I acted upon no other motive, than the advancement of thy service, the only thing that I value, and beyond which I extend not my view, nor have eyes for any other object. I prostrate myself at thy feet.

X
From the seraglio of Fatme;
7th of the moon Maharam, 1713.

LETTER XL.

PHARAN to USBEK, his sovereign lord.

WERT thou here, magnificent lord, I should appear before thee, all papered over with petitions and representations, and all little enough to contain an account of the outrages I have suffered since thy departure, from the hands of the chief black eunuch, the wickedest of men.

Under colour of some railleries, which he pretends I uttered concerning the unhappiness of his condition, he pours upon my head the whole stock of his inexpressible revenge; he has inflamed against me the cruel intendant of thy gardens, who, since thy departure, imposes upon me most insufferable tasks, under which I have a thousand times been upon the brink of expiring, yet without abating in the least of my ardour to serve thee. How many times have I said within myself; I have a master who is all over goodness, and yet there breathes not a more unhappy slave than I!

I confess to thee, magnificent lord, I did not think my misery to be capable of any addition: but this cursed eunuch was resolved to fill up the measure of his villainy. Some days ago, of his own private authority, he marked me out for a keeper of thy sacred women; that is, he destined me to an execution, which would be, to one in my case, a thousand times worse than death itself. Those, who at their birth have been so unfortunate as to receive from their cruel parents such treatment, have this consolation, that they never knew what it was to be otherwise; but for me to be degraded and stripped of manhood,

I am sure I should die of grief; if I overlived the pain.

I embrace thy feet, sublime lord, in the most profound humility; grant me to feel the effects of that virtue which is so much respected: and let it not be said that by thy command there is in the world one unhappy man the more.

From the gardens of Fatme,
7th of the moon Maharam, 1713.

LETTER XLI.

USBEK to PHARAN, at the gardens at Fatme.

RECEIVE joy into thy heart, and recognize these sacred characters: make the chief eunuch and the intendant of my garden to kiss the same: I forbid them to lay hand on thee before I return: let them purchase an eunuch to supply the place of him that is wanting: go on and perform thy duty, as if thou hadst me always before thine eyes: and know, that the greater my kindness is, the more severely shalt thou be punished, if thou abusest it.

Paris, the 25th of the Moon.
Rhegeb, 1713.

LETTER XLII.

USBEK to RHEDI, at Venice.

THERE are in France three sorts of professions, the church, the sword, and the long robe. Each has a sovereign contempt for the other two: a man,

for example, that ought to be despised only for being a fool, is often despised only because he is a lawyer.

Even the vilest mechanics will dispute for the excellency of the trade they have chosen: each sets himself above him that is of a different profession, in proportion to the idea which he has framed to himself of his own.

All men, more or less, resemble that woman of the province of Erivan, who, having received some favour from one of our monarchs, wished a thousand times in her benedictions she bestowed on him, that heaven would make him governor of Erivan.

I have read, that a French ship putting in upon the coast of Guinea, some of the crew went ashore to buy sheep. The natives carried them to the king, who was dispensing justice to his subjects under a tree. He was on his throne, that is to say, a piece of timber, as stately as if he had sat upon that of the great Mogul: about him stood three or four guards armed with hedge-stakes: an umbrella in the form of a canopy skreened him from the heat of the sun. All his own ornaments, as well as those of the queen his consort, consisted in their black hides, and some few rings. This prince, whose vanity was greater than his poverty, asks those strangers, whether he was not much talked of in France: he fancied his name could not but be carried from one pole to another: and being quite the reverse of that conqueror, of whom it is said, he had silenced the whole earth, this prince fancied it could not be but the whole universe must speak of him.

When the Cham of Tartary has dined, a herald proclaims, that all the princes of the earth may go to dinner if they think fit: and this barbarian, that lives upon milk, who has neither house nor home,

and subsist upon nothing but robbing and cutting of throats, looks upon all the kings of the world as his slaves, and regularly insults over them twice a day.

Paris, 28th of the Moon,
Rh^{eb}geb, 1713.

LETTER XLIII.

RHEDI to USBEK, at ***.

YESTERDAY morning, as I was in bed, I hear a violent knocking at the door; which was soon opened, or rather broke open, by a man with whom I had contracted some acquaintance, and who seemed to me to be quite out of his wits: his apparel was a great deal more than modest: his periuke, all awry, had not been so much as combed out; he had not had leisure to get his black waistcoat mended; and for that day he had laid aside the wise precautions with † which he was wont to disguise the dilapidations of his equipage.

'Get up, says he to me, I shall have occasion for you all this day; I have a thousand implements to buy, and would be glad to have you with me: first, we must go to the street St. Honore, to speak to a scrivener, who has a commission to sell an estate to the value of five hundred thousand livres, and I am willing to have the refusal of it. As I came hither, I stopped a moment in the suburbs of St. Germain, where I hired a house for two thousand crowns, and hope to get the contract executed some time to-day.'

As soon as I was dressed, or pretty near the matter, my chap hastily lugs me down with him: 'First,

‘ said he, let us go and buy a coach, and settle our ‘ equipage :’ accordingly he bought not only a coach, but a variety of merchandize, to the value of one hundred thousand livres, in less than an hour’s time: all this was soon over, for he did not stand hagling, nor counted out a farthing of money, so that he lost no time, nor was ever out of his way. I began to muse upon this; and when I had examined into him a little, I found in him an odd complication of riches and poverty, so that I knew not what to think: but, at length, I broke silence, and taking him a little aside, Sir, says I to him, who is to pay for all this? ‘ Myself, says he: come along with me into my ‘ chamber, and I will shew you immense treasures ‘ and riches, enough to raise the envy of the greatest ‘ monarchs, but not your envy, for you shall share ‘ them with me.’ I follow him: we clamber up to his fifth story, and then, by a ladder, we ascend to the sixth, which was a closet open to the four winds: in this closet I saw nothing but two or three dozen of earthen basons, filled with various liquors. ‘ I ‘ rose betimes, says he; and the first thing I did, ‘ according to my custom these five and twenty years, ‘ I visited my work; and found that the great day ‘ was at last come, that was to make me the richest ‘ man upon the earth. See you this red liquor here? ‘ It now has all the qualities required by the philo- ‘ sophers towards the transmutation of metals: I ‘ have extracted from it these grains you see here: ‘ they are true gold with respect to their colour, ‘ though somewhat imperfect as to their weight. ‘ This secret, which Nicholas Flamel found out, ‘ but which Raymund Lully, and millions besides, ‘ have missed, is fallen into my hands; and I am ‘ this day a happy adept. God grant I make such

'use of the treasure he has been pleased to communicate to me, as may be for his glory !'

I turned about, and went, or rather fell down the ladder, transported with rage, and left this rich man in his hospital.

Paris, the last of the Moon

Rhegeb, 1713.

LETTER XLIV.

USBEK to RHEDI, at Venice.

I MEET here with people that dispute without end about religion ; but, in my mind, the contention is, who shall least follow the precepts of it.

They are not only not better Christians, but not better citizens : and this is what affects me very much : for whatever religion a man lives under, the observation of the laws, love of our neighbour, duty to our parents, are always the chief acts of religion.

And, indeed, what is the first object of a religious man, but to please the Deity who established that religion he makes profession of ? But the surèst way to do this is doubtless to observe the rules of society, and the duties of humanity ; for, in whatever religion a man lives, the moment that any religion at all is supposed, it must also necessarily be supposed that God loves men, because he establishes a religion to make them happy : that if he loves men, we are sure to please him by loving them too ; that is, by practising towards them all the duties of charity and humanity, and not violating the laws under which they live.

We are much surer to please God this way, than by observing such or such a ceremony. For cere-

monies have no degree of goodness in themselves; they are only relatively good, and in the supposition that God has enjoined them: but this is a very nice point: we may easily deceive ourselves therein; for we must make choice of the ceremonies of one religion, among those of two thousand.

A certain man every day made this prayer to God.

' Lord, I understand nothing of these disputes that
 ' are continually had concerning thee: I am will-
 ' ing to serve thee according to thy will; but every
 ' man whom I consult will have me serve thee ac-
 ' cording to his. When I am about to apply my-
 ' self to thee in prayer, I know not what language to
 ' make use of, nor what posture to put myself in:
 ' one bids me pray standing; another says I must do
 ' it sitting, and a third will have me to perform it
 ' kneeling. This is not all; there are who pretend
 ' I ought to wash me every morning with cold wa-
 ' ter; others assert that thou wilt look upon me with
 ' abhorrence, if I cut not off a small piece of my
 ' flesh: I happened the other day to eat a rabbet in
 ' a caravansary (an inn): three men that were there
 ' put me into a terrible fright, by telling me, that I
 ' had most grievously offended thee: one *, because
 ' it was an unclean creature; another †, because it
 ' had been strangled; and the last ‡, because it was
 ' not fish. A Brachman who was going by, and
 ' whom I appealed to, says to me, they are all in
 ' the wrong; for, to be sure, you did not kill the
 ' creature with your own hands: but I did, says I.
 ' Ah! then you have been guilty of an abominable
 ' action, and God will never pardon you, says he to
 ' me, with a severe voice: how do you know but
 ' that your father's soul was passed into that creature?

* A Jew. † A Turk. ‡ An Armenian.

All these things, Lord, give me an unconceivable disturbance of mind : I cannot move my head, but I am threatened with having provoked thee to wrath, and yet all this while I desire to please thee, and in so doing to employ that life I owe unto thee : I know not whether I err ; but I cannot help believing that the best way to do this, is to live like a good citizen in the society wherein thou hast placed me, and like a good father in the family which thou hast given me.

Paris, the 8th of the Moon

Chahban, 1712.

L E T T E R XLV.

ZACHI to USBEK, at Paris.

I HAVE a great piece of news to tell thee : I am reconciled to Zephis : the seraglio that was divided into parties is now united again ; there is nothing but thee wanting within these walls, wherein peace dwells : come, my dear Usbek ; come, and let love triumph therein.

I entertained Zephis at a banquet, to which thy mother, thy wives, and principal concubines were invited : thy aunts, and many of thy she-cousins, were there likewise : they came on horseback, covered with the dusky shade of their veils and of their apparel.

Next day we set out for the country, where we hoped to be more at liberty : we mounted our camels, and went four and four in a nest. It being a match made of a sudden, we had not time to send about the neighbourhood to acquaint them with it, that they might keep themselves within doors : but

the chief eunuch, whose thoughts are always at work, took another precaution; for, beside the cloth which hindered us from being seen, he added so thick a curtain, that it hindered us from seeing any body.

When we came to cross the river, each of us according to custom boxed ourselves up, and was conveyed into the boat: for we were told the river was full of people. One more curious than ordinary coming too near us received a mortal wound, which for ever deprived him of the light of the day. Another, that was bathing stark naked on the shore, met with the like fate. And thus were these two unfortunate wretches sacrificed to thy honour and ours, by the hands of thy faithful eunuchs.

But mind what happened to us afterwards. We were hardly got to the middle of the river, when so boisterous a wind arose, and so frightful a cloud covered the sky, that the mariners began to be in a consternation. Frighted at this danger, we almost all of us swooned away. I remember I heard the voice and disputes of our eunuchs: some of whom were for letting us know our danger, and for setting us at liberty: but the head of them declared he would rather die than suffer his master to be thus dishonoured, and that he would stab him that should presume to make such a bold proposal. One of my she-slaves, quite beside herself, came running to my assistance and all undrest: but a black eunuch laid hold on her roughly, and sent her back to the place from whence she came. Then I swooned away, and recovered not my senses till the danger was over.

Women that go abroad, especially upon the water, have a hard time of it! Men are exposed to no dangers but what threaten their lives; but we are every instant in danger of losing our lives or our vir-

Adieu, my dear Usbek. I shall for ever adore thee.

From the seraglio at Fatme,
the second of the Moon
Rhamazan, 1713.

LETTER XLVI.

USBEK to RHEDI, at Venice.

THEY who love to improve in knowlege are never idle. Though I have no important affair upon my hands, yet I am continually employed. I pass my life away in observation : I every evening commit to writing my remarks on what I have seen, and on what I have heard in the day-time : I am like a child whose tender organs receive strong impressions from the least objects.

You will hardly believe me when I tell you we are welcome to all companies and all societies : I believe it is much owing to Rica's lively wit and natural gaiety, which makes him court all company, and be equally courted by all : our outlandish air is now no longer offensive to any body ; nay, we enjoy the surprise they are in to see us polite : for the French imagine not that our climate can produce such men as we are : and yet it must be owned, they are well worth the undeeceiving.

I have spent some days at a country seat near Paris, with a man of note, who is overjoyed when his house is full of company. His wife is a very lovely person, and, besides an unfeigned modesty, she has a sprightliness which our ladies of Persia know nothing of, by reason of their recluse lives.

Being a stranger, the best thing I could do, was,

according to custom, to make my remarks upon that crowd of people that are incessantly flocking together, whose characters still presented me with something new : at first I took notice of a man whose simplicity pleased me much ; I struck up with him, and he as readily joined company with me, so that we were almost inseparable.

One day, as we were discoursing together in private, though we were then in the midst of a great circle, yet leaving the great talkers to themselves, perhaps you will think me more curious than well-bred, says I ; but, pray, give me leave to ask you some questions ; for I am quite weary of being thus thrown out of all play, and conversing with people I can make nothing of : my mind has been above two days at work, and there is not a single man here that has not put me to the torture above two hundred times over ; and yet in a thousand years I should never be able to make a right guess at them ; they are as invisible as the wives of our grand monarch. Tell me but what you would be at, replies he to me, and I will inform you in whatever you desire to know ; and the rather because I take you to be a discreet man, and one that will not abuse my confidence.

Who is that person, said I to him, that talks so much of his entertaining the great ones, and is so familiar with your dukes, and speaks so often to your ministers, who are said to be difficult to come at ? He must needs be a man of quality, but his aspect is so mean that he does not do much honour to men of quality : and, besides, I do not find he has any manner of education. I am a foreigner, but I cannot help thinking there is in general a certain politeness common to all nations : I see nothing of this in him : are your men of quality here worse educated than others ? This man is a farrier of the king's reve-

ness, answered he smiling : 'He is as much above others in riches, as he is below all the world in birth : he would have the best table at Paris, could he but prevail with himself never to dine at home : he has a great deal of impertinence, as you see ; but then he excels in a cook, for which he is not ungrateful, for you have heard him all this day do nothing but commend his cook.'

And who is that huge fellow there in black, says I to him, that the lady has placed next to herself ? How comes he to dress so dismal, and yet put on so gay a behaviour, and look so florid ? He returns a gracious smile to every thing that is said to him ; his apparel is more modest, but yet more formal, than that of your women. He is a preacher, says he ; and, which is yet worse, a director of consciences : for all he looks so, he knows more than the husbands do : he knows the blind sides of the wives, who likewise know that he too is not without his blind side. How ! says I : he is always a talking of something which he calls GRACE. Not always, replied he ; when he whispers a pretty woman, he dwells more upon the topic of man's fall : in public he thunders ; but in a corner is as gentle as a lamb. Methinks, says I to him, he is mightily taken notice of, and is respected in a more than ordinary manner : how comes he to be so distinguished ? He is a necessary man ; he is the sweetner of a retired life ; petty counsels, officious cares, set visits ; he disposes a pain in the head better than any man alive ; he is a most excellent man !

But if I am not too troublesome to you, pray tell me, who is he that fits right against us, so poorly habited, that makes so many ugly faces, speaks a different language from the rest, and has not the wit to talk, but talks to get wit ? He is a poet, answers

he, and a grotesque of a man. This sort of people say, they are born what they are : it is very true ; and what they are born they will continue all their lives, that is to say, the most ridiculous of men, for the most part : accordingly no-body spares them : contempt is liberally poured on them from all hands : hunger has brought this man hither ; and he is well received both by the master and mistress, whose good-nature and good-breeding make no distinction of persons : he made their epithalamium when they were married ; and it is the best thing he ever did : for it happens to be as fortunate a match as he foretold it would be.

You will hardly believe it, added he, you are so prepossessed with your oriental customs ; there are such things amongst us as happy marriages, and women whose virtue alone is their sufficient guard. The couple here before us enjoy a reciprocal peace that cannot be disturbed ; they are beloved and esteemed by every body ; there is but one thing amiss ; their natural good-humour makes them give a free admission to all sorts of people ; which sometimes is the cause why there is very bad company : not as I disapprove of such : we must live with people as we find them ; it oftentimes happens, that such as are said to be good company are only more refined in vice ; as it is with poisons, the more subtile, the more dangerous.

Who is that old man, said I to him softly, that looks so morose ? I took him at first for a foreigner ; for, besides his being differently dressed from the others, he censures every thing that is done in France, and is displeased with your public management. He is an old warriour, says he, that makes himself memorable to all his auditors by the prolixity of his achievements ; he will not allow that France ever

gained a battle in which he was not present; or that any siege is worth talking of, where he did not mount the trenches: he fancies himself so necessary to our history, that he believes it was at an end with the last action he was concerned in: he looks upon some wounds he received, as he would upon the dissolution of the monarchy: and, quite contrary to those philosophers, who say, that the present time alone is enjoyed, and that the past is nothing; he for his part only enjoys the past, and exists not but in the campaigns that he has made; he breathes in the times that are elapsed, in like manner as heroes are to live in those that are to come. But wherefore, says I, did he quit the service? He did not quit it, answers he, but the service quitted him; he is employed in a small garrison, where he will be narrative the rest of his days: but he will never advance further; the path of honour is shut up against him. Why so? said I. We have a maxim in France, replied he, never to raise officers whose patience has languished in subaltern offices; we look upon them as men whose spirit is contracted into a narrowness of particulars; and who, being habituated to little things, are become incapable of greater: we are of opinion, that a man, who at thirty years of age has not the qualities of a general, will never have them: that he who has not that roll of his eye, as to represent at once a track of several leagues, in all its different situations; that presence of mind that enables him in a victory to improve all advantages, and in a defeat suggests all proper resources; will never acquire those talents as long as he lives: and therefore we have among us bright employments for great and sublime men, on whom heaven has not only bestowed the heart, but the genius of a hero; and inferior posts for such whose talents are inferior. Of this

36 PERSIAN LETTERS.

number are those who are grown old in an obscure warfare ; they at most succeed only in doing that which they have done all their lives long ; and we ought not to begin to load them extraordinarily at a time when they begin to grow weak.

A moment afterwards the spirit of curiosity seized me again, and I said to him : I give you my word I will ask you no farther questions, if you will bear with one more : who is that young man in his own hair, who has so little wit, and so very much impertinence ? What makes him talk so much louder than the rest, and seem to be glad he is alive ? He is a favourite of fortune, says he to me. Here some people came in, others went out ; all got up ; some-body came to speak to my gentleman, and I remained as wise as I was before. But, a moment afterwards this young man chanced to be close by me. It is fine weather, directing his speech to me, shall we take a turn in the garden ? I answered him in the civillest manner I could ; and so we went out together. I came into the country, says he, to gratify the mistress of the house here, with whom I am upon no ill terms : there are some women in the world that are termagant or so ; but what should a man do ? I visit the handsomest women in Paris ; but I do not confine myself to one ; and I often give them the slip ; for, between you and me, I am a sad dog. Then says I to him, Sir, you have some post or employment that hinders you from a closer attendance upon them. No, Sir, I have nothing in the world to do, but to make a husband run mad, or drive a father to despair : I love to alarm a woman, that thinks she has me fast, and reduce her within a finger's breadth of losing me : there is a knot of us young fellows, who divide thus the whole town among us, and make it take notice of every step we take. By what I find,

says I to him, you make more noise than the most valiant warrior, and are more regarded than the gravest magistrate. Were you in Persia, you would not enjoy all these advantages ; you would be fitter to guard our women than to pleasure them. Here I began to redden ; and, I believe, had I gone on a little further, I should have affronted him.

What sayest thou of a country where such people as these are tolerated, and a man who follows so vile a trade is suffered to live ? where infidelity, treachery, rapes, and injustice, are the steps that lead to eminence ? where a man shall be valued, because he deprives a father of his daughter, a husband of his wife, and brings distraction into the happiest and most sacred societies ?

Happy the children of Haly, who defended their families from infamy and debauchery : the light of the sun is not purer than the fire that burns in the heart of our women ; our daughters think not without trembling of the day that is to deprive them of that virtue, which makes them like angels and incorporeal powers !

O my dear native soil, whom the rising sun honours with his first regards ; thou art not soiled with those horrible crimes, which oblige that planet to hide himself as soon as he appears in the cloudy west.

Paris, the 5th of the Moon.

Rhamazan, 1713.

LETTER XLVII.

RICA to USBEK, at ***.

THE other day, being in my chamber, in came a dervise very oddly dressed ; his beard reached down quite to his hempen girdle : he was bare-footed ; his habit was grey, coarse, and in some parts picked : the whole figure of the man was so whimsical, that my first thought was to send for a painter to take a sketch of him.

He accosted me with a long compliment, wherein he gave me to understand that he was a man of merit, and moreover a capuchin : I have been informed, Sir, added he, that you are to return shortly to the court of Persia, where you hold a very eminent rank : I come to beg your protection, and to desire you to obtain us, from your king, a little habitation near Casbin for two or three monks. My good father, said I, you design then to go to Persia ! I, Sir, cried he ! no marry ; I am provincial here, and would not change my condition with any capuchine in the universe. Why, what the deuce do you want of me then ? Why, answered he, if we had such a little habitation, our fathers in Italy would send two or three of their monks thither. I suppose, then, you are acquainted with those monks, said I. No, Sir, I know nothing of them. Why, what a plague then will their going into Persia be to you ? A wondrous fine project truly, to have a brace of capuchins breathe the air of Casbin : it will be of general use both to Europe and Asia, no doubt ; it is mighty necessary our monarchs should look after this affair. These are noble colonies indeed ! Get you gone ; you and the rest of you are not cut out for transplan-

tation ; you will do much better to continue creeping about just where you were first engendered.

Paris, 25th of the Moon

Rhamazan, 1713.

LETTER XLVIII.

RICA to ***

I HAVE known some people whose virtue was so natural to them, that they were hardly sensible of it : they adhered to their duty without any force upon themselves, and followed it as it were by instinct : far from exalting their rare qualities in their discourse, they seemed not to have yet reached their own knowledge. These are the men I love ; not those virtuous folks that seem to be amazed at their being so, and look upon a good action as a prodigy, which must fill every body with wonder that hears of it.

If modesty be a necessary virtue, even in those whom heaven has indued with the greatest talents ; what shall we say of those insects that dare to shew a pride would dishonour the greatest men ?

I meet every where with people that are eternally talking of themselves : their conversation is a looking-glass that always presents you with their impertinent figure : they will hold you a discourse about the least accidents that ever befel them, and think their being concerned in them must make them considerable to you : there is nothing but what they have done, seen, said, or thought : they are the universal model ; an inexhaustible subject of comparisons ; a spring of examples never to be dried up. How wretchedly insipid is praise, when it bounds back to the place it comes from !

Some days ago a man of this character plagued us for two hours together with his merit and his great talents : but as there is no perpetual motion in the world, he at last was silent. A little of the talk then fell to our share, and we took hold of the opportunity.

One that seemed to be a little troubled with the spleen, began to complain of the many tiresome disturbers of conversation : what, nothing but fools that are eternally giving you their own characters, and bringing every thing home to themselves ! Your observation is just, cried our talker abruptly : ah ! if men would but act like me ! I never praise myself : I have wealth and birth ; I spend handsomely ; my friends tell me I do not want wit : but you never hear me talk of these things : if I have any good qualities, that which I value myself most upon is my modesty.

I could not but wonder at this impudent creature ; and while he was running on, I said to myself : happy the man who has vanity enough never to speak well of himself ; who stands in awe of his hearers, and will not venture to set up his merit against the pride and self-love of other people.

Paris, 20th of the Moon
Rhamazan, 1713.

LETTER XLIX.

NARGUM, the Persian envoy, residing in Muscovy,
to USBEK, at Paris.

THEY write me word from Hspahan, that thou hast left Persia, and art now actually at Paris. Why must I owe my information to any but thyself ! The commands of the king of kings have detain-

ed me five years in this country ; where I have effect-ed divers important negotiations.

Thou knowest the Czar is the only Christian prince whose interests are mingled with those of Persia, be-cause he is a enemy to the Turks as well as we.

His empire is greater than ours : for they reckon it two thousand leagues from Moscow to the utmost li-mits of his dominions on the side of China.

He is absolute master of the lives and fortunes of his subjects, who are all slaves, except four families. The lieutenant of the prophets, the king of kings, who has heaven for his footstool, does not make a more dreadful use of his power.

To look at the frightful climate of Muscovy, a man would never dream that it should be a punishment to be banished from it ; and yet whenever any great man is disgraced, he is sent into Siberia.

As the law of our prophet forbids us to drink wine, the prince's decree prohibits the use of it to the Mus-covites.

They have a way of receiving their guests, which has nothing at all of Persian in it. As soon as a strang-er enters their house, the husband presents him his wife ; the stranger kisses her, and this is reckoned a compliment to the husband.

Though the fathers in the marriage-contract of their daughters generally covenant, that their hus-band shall not beat them, yet you cannot think how much the Muscovite women love to be beaten : they cannot be made to believe that they have their hus-band's heart, if he does not bang their bones for them : an opposite behaviour in him is an unpardonable sign of indifference. Here is a letter which one of them lately wrote to her mother :

MY DEAR MOTHER,

' I am the most unfortunate of women : I have
 ' omitted nothing to gain my husband's affection ;
 ' but cannot do it. Yesterday I had a thousand things
 ' to do about the house : I went abroad, and staid
 ' out all the live long day : I thought, at my return,
 ' he would have beat me purely ; and he did not so
 ' much as give me an angry word. My sister has far
 ' different treatment : her husband rib-roasts her
 ' daily : she cannot look at a man, but he is present-
 ' ly about her bones : they love one another sincere-
 ' ly, and live the most comfortable life in the world.
 ' This it is that makes her so vain : but she shall
 ' not despise me long : I am resolved I will make my
 ' husband love me, cost what it will : I will provoke
 ' him to such a degree, that sure he must give me
 ' some proofs of his kindness : it shall never be said
 ' that I could never get one beating, and that I live
 ' in the house unminded : upon the least slap he gives
 ' me, I will set up my throat, and roar out as loud as
 ' ever I can bawl, that people may believe things go
 ' right ; and I fancy if any neighbour should come to
 ' my help, I should tear their eyes out. I beg, my
 ' dear mother, you would represent to my husband
 ' that he uses me very unworthily. My father, good
 ' man, did not do thus by you : and I remember
 ' when I was a little girl, I thought sometimes he
 ' loved you a little too passionately. I embrace you
 ' my dear mother.'

The Muscovites must not go out of the kingdom,
 even to travel : so that being separated from all other
 nations by the laws of the country, they have pre-
 served their antient customs with so much the more

constancy, as they do not think it possible there should be any other.

But the prince now reigning was resolved to alter every thing : he had a sad conflict with them about their beards : the clergy and monks were no less zealous to preserve their ignorance.

He applies himself to make the arts flourish among them, and neglects nothing to fill Europe and Asia with the glory of his nation, which, till lately, has been overlooked, and was hardly known to any but itself.

Restless, and incessantly busy, he travels about his vast dominions, every where leaving behind him tokens of his natural severity.

He makes excursions even beyond them, as if they were not sufficient to contain him, and seeks in Europe other provinces and new kingdoms.

I embrace thee, my dear Usbek : let me hear from thee, I conjure thee.

Moscow, 2d of the Moon

Chalval, 1713.

LETTER L.

RICA to USBEK, at ***

WAS the other day in company where I diverted myself well enough. There were women of all ages : one of fourscore ; one of sixty ; one of forty, who had a niece that might be about one or two and twenty. A sort of instinct made me get near this last : she whispered me in my ear : what do you say to my aunt, who at her years tries to make conquests, and would be thought pretty ? She is much in the wrong, said I ; that is a design only proper for you.

A moment afterwards, I happened to be by her aunt, who says to me : what do you think of that woman there, who is at least threescore, and yet spent above an hour this morning at her toilet? It was all time lost, says I, and not to be excused in any but a woman of your beauty. I went to the miserable creature of threescore, and pitied her in my heart, when she whispered me : can any thing be so ridiculous! Look there at that woman who is fourscore years old, and yet wears flame-colour ribbands : she would fain seem young, and really she is so ; for this is mere childhood. Heavens, said I to myself ! shall we never have eyes but for the ridicule of other folks? Perhaps it is a blessing, said I afterwards, that we can gather comfort from the weaknesses of others. However, being in a vein to be merry, Come, says I, we have ascended far enough ; let us now go downward, and begin with the antient gentlewoman that is at top. Madam, the lady I just now spoke with, and you, are so very like, that one would swear you were two sisters : I fancy you are just of one age. Aye marry, Sir, quoth she, when one dies of age, the other will quake for fear. I do not think there is two days difference between us. Having done with my decrepit dame, I went to her of sixty. Madam, says I, you must decide a wager I am concerned in : I have betted, that that lady and you (shewing her the woman of forty) are of the same age ; Good faith, says she, I do not believe there is six months difference. So far good. Proceed. I still go downwards, and came next to the woman of forty. Madam, do me the favour to tell me, whether it is not in jest that you call the young lady there at the other table your nice ? You are as young as she is : nay, she has something of a decay in her face, that is not to be found in yours ; and the lively colour of your cheeks —

No, hold, says she, I am her aunt, that is true: but her mother was at least five and twenty years older than myself: we were not by the same venter; I have heard my late sister say, that her daughter and I were both born in a year. I thought as much, madam; and might well wonder.

My dear Usbek, the women, when they find themselves dying before-hand by the departure of their charms, would fain steal back again towards youth. Why should we be surprized at their endeavouring to cheat others? They do all they can to cheat themselves, and drive out the most afflicting of all thoughts,

Paris, 3d of the Moon
Chalval, 1713.

LETTER LI.

ZELIS to USBEK, at Paris.

NEVER was passion more violent than that of Cosrou the white eunuch for my slave Zelida: he demands her in marriage with so much fury, that I cannot refuse him. And why should I oppose it, when her mother does not, and Zelida herself seems content with the notion of this mock marriage, this vain shadow that is offered her.

What will she do with this poor wretch, who will have nothing of the husband, but his jealousy; who will never be warmed out of his coldness into any thing but an useless despair; who will be continually recalling the memory of what he once was, to put her in mind of what he now is not; who, always ready to enjoy, and never enjoying, will be eternally cheating himself and her too; and will re-

mind her incessantly of the wretchedness of her condition ?

Heavens, to be always in visions and fancies ! To live in nothing but imagination ! To be always on the verge of pleasure, and never taste it ! Languishing in the arms of a wretch, instead of answering to his sighs, to answer only to his bewailings !

What a contempt must one have for a man of this sort made only to guard, and never to possess ? I look for love, but can find none. I speak to thee freely, knowing thou lovest my plain way, and preferrest my open confessions and relish for pleasure, to the feigned modesty of my companions.

I have heard thee say a thousand times, that the eunuchs taste a sort of pleasure with women, which is unknown to us ; that nature makes up their losses to them ; that she has expedients which repair the disadvantage of their circumstances ; that they may indeed lose their manhood, but not their sensation, and that in this state they have a kind of third sense, whereby they only change, as it were, one delight for another.

If this be so, I shall think Zelida less unhappy : it is some comfort to live with people less miserable.

Send me thy orders in this matter, and let me know whether thou wouldest have this marriage solemnized in the seraglio. Adieu.

From the seraglio of Ispahan, 5th of the Moon Chalval, 1713.

LETTER LII.

RICA to USBEK, at ***.

I WAS this morning in my chamber, which thou knowest is separated from the next only by a very thin partition, and that pretty full of holes, so that one may hear every thing that is said in the adjoining room. A man that was walking about in a great passion, said to another : ' I cannot imagine what is the matter ; but every thing goes ill with me : here it is above three days since I have said any thing that has been to my honour, and I have been confounded among the herd in every conversation, without having the least notice taken of me, or being twice spoken to. I had got ready some flights to enliven my discourse ; but they would not give me time to bring them in : I had a very clever story to tell, but every time I strove to bring the discourse to it, they gave me the slip, as if I had made it on purpose ; I have some rare jests, that for these four days have lain in my head till they are almost grown stale, and I have not once had an opportunity of making the least use of them : if things go on at this rate, I fancy at last I shall grow a fool : my stars seem resolved to have it so. Yesterday, I was in great hopes of shining among three or four old women, who certainly had no design to play tricks with me ; and I had got some of the prettiest things in the world to say. I was above a quarter of an hour striving to turn the conversation, as I would have had it ; but they never kept to any connection in their talk, but, like the fatal sisters, always cut off the thread of my discourse. Faith ! the reputa-

' tion of wit is no small trouble to support : I cannot
 ' think how you managed matters to attain it.
 ' A thought comes into my head, cries the other :
 ' let us labour jointly to promote each other's wit;
 ' let us go partners : we will tell one another every
 ' day before-hand what to say, and stand by each o-
 ' ther so stoutly, that if any body offers to interrupt
 ' us in the midst of our ideas, we will drag him in-
 ' to us ; and if he resists, we will use violence : we
 ' will agree what passages to approve, where to
 ' smile, when to laugh outright : you shall see we
 ' will give the turn to all conversations, and all the
 ' world shall admire the quickness of our wit, and
 ' the happiness of our repartees : we will protect one
 ' another upon a nod : you shall shine to-day ; to-
 ' morrow you shall be my second : I will go with you
 ' into a house, and cry out, as soon as I introduce
 ' you, I must tell you a very pleasant answer this gen-
 ' tleman just now made to one that we met in the
 ' street ; and then turning to you, he did not expect
 ' any thing like it ; you silenced him fairly. I will
 ' repeat some of my verses, and you shall say : I was
 ' by when he made them ; it was at a supper, and
 ' he did not study for them a moment. Nay, you
 ' and I will often rally one another ; and people will
 ' say, See how smartly they battle it ; how briskly
 ' they defend themselves ; they do not spare one
 ' another, faith ! let us hear how he will come off
 ' with that ; to a miracle ! what presence of mind
 ' he is master of ! this is a tight engagement : but
 ' they will never dream, that he fought it all over
 ' the night before. We must buy some jest books,
 ' wrote for the use of those that have no wit at all,
 ' but would seem to have a great deal ; all depends
 ' upon copying after good originals. I will warrant
 ' you in six months time, we hold a conversation of

of an hour long, made up of nothing but jests: but we must take care of one thing; which is to push the success of them as far as it will go; it is not enough to say a good thing: it ought to be published; it should be spread about every where: without this, it is but thrown away: and I own nothing in the world is such a mortification to a man, as to have a smart thing, which he has said, die and be buried in oblivion in the ear of a fool. It is true, we often have amends made us for this, by having a good deal of non-sense, that we say, pass unexamined; and this is all the comfort we have in those cases. This, my dear, is the method we must take: follow my directions, and in six months you shall get a place in the academy: you see your trouble will be but short; for, when once you are a member of that, you may throw away all your arts: you will then be reckoned a wit in spite of your teeth. It is observed in France, that when a man enters himself of any society, he presently catches what we may call THE SPIRIT OF THE BODY; you will find it so; and I am in no pain for you, but how you will bear the heaps of applause that will be showered upon you.

Paris, the 6th of the Moon
Zilcade, 1713.

LETTER LIII.

RICA to IBBEN, at Smyrna.

AMONG the Europeans, the first quarter of an hour's marriage removes all difficulties; the last favours are always of the same date with the nuptial

benediction: the women do not act like ours in Persia, who dispute the ground sometimes for whole months together: these are as free as ever they can: their indulgence is plenary; if they lose nothing, it is because they have nothing to lose: but you are sure of knowing before-hand, to their eternal shame be it spoken, the moment of their defeat; and without consulting the stars, one may exactly foretell the hour of the birth of their chil dern.

The French seldom talk of their wives, for fear they should speak before people that are better acquainted with them than themselves.

There is among them a set of very unhappy men, whom no body comforts; namely, the JEALOUS HUSBANDS; there are some that every body hates, to wit, the JEALOUS HUSBANDS; there are some that all men despise; the same JEALOUS HUSBANDS.

And accordingly there is no country in the world where there are so few of them, as among the French: their tranquillity is not grounded upon any confidence that they place in their wives, but rather on the ill opinion they have of them: all the wise precautions of the Asiatics, their veils, their prisons, the vigilance of their eunuchs, seem to them more likely to exercise the contrivance of this sex, than to tire it. Here the husbands bear their misfortunes with as good a grace as they can, and look upon the infidelity of their wives as strokes of fate, which there is no avoiding. A husband, that should pretend to be the sole possessor of his wife, would be thought a disturber of the public pleasure, and a kind of madman, that would enjoy the light of the sun all himself.

Here a husband, that loves his wife, is looked upon as a man that has not merit enough to get the love of any other woman; that makes use of the authority of the laws to supply his own want of agreeableness;

that insists upon all his private rights, to the prejudice of a whole society ; that takes a thing, which was only pledged to him, to be his own property ; and that does all that lies in his power to frustrate a tacit convention, which is the happiness of both sexes. This title of husband to a coquette, which we are so cautious of owning in Asia, is here borne without uneasiness : people find opportunities enow of taking their revenge. A prince comforts himself for the loss of one place, by the winning of another. While the Turk was taking Bagdad from us, were not we getting the fortress of Candahor from the Mogul ?

A man, that in general bears with his wife's disloyalty, is not found fault with ; on the contrary, he is highly commended for his prudence : there are only a few particular cases that are scandalous.

Not that there are no virtuous women in this country ; they are indeed very much distinguished : my conductor always shewed them me ; but they were all so ugly, that a man must be a saint, not to hate virtue.

After what I have told thee of the manners of this country, thou wilt easily believe the French do not much value themselves upon constancy : they think it as ridiculous for a man to swear to a woman, that he will always love her, as to resolve he will always enjoy health or happiness. When they promise a woman that they will always love her, they suppose that she on her side will undertake to continue always lovely ; and if she fails on her part, they think themselves no longer bound to theirs.

Paris, 7th of the Moon

Zilcade, 1714.

LETTER LIV.

USBEK to IBBEN, at Smyrna.

GAMING is very much practised in Europe : it is a very handsome employment to be a gamester : this single title supplies the want of birth, riches, or probity : it sets all the professors upon the foot of gentlemen, without farther examination, tho' every body knows how much they are deceived in judging after this manner : but they have agreed to be incorrigible.

The women especially are strangely addicted to it : it is true, they seldom follow it in their youth, but in order to indulge a more favourite passion : but as they grow old, their relish for gaming seems to get fresh youth : and this passion then fills the vacancies of all the rest.

They are all resolved to undo their husbands ; and, in order to effect it, they have various methods adapted to every age, from the tenderest youth to the most decrepit old age : dress and equipage begin the ruin ; gallantry helps it forwards ; play completes it.

I have often seen nine or ten women, or rather nine or ten centuries, placed round a table : I have observed them in their hopes, their fears, their joys, and particularly in their transports of fury ; thou wouldest swear they could never have time to appease themselves, and that their lives would end before their rage : thou wouldest have been in some doubt whether those they paid their money to, were their creditors or their legatees.

Our holy prophet seems to have had it chiefly in his view to restrain us from every thing that might

disturb our reason ; he forbade us the use of wine, which obscures it, or rather buries it : he expressly prohibited all games of chance : and where it was impossible he should remove the cause of our passions, he strove to deaden them. Love, among us, brings neither disturbance nor fury along with it : is a languid indolent passion, and lets our soul remain in a perfect calm : plurality of wives delivers us from their dominion, and moderates the violence of our desires.

Paris, 18th of the Moon,
Zilhage, 1714.

LETTER LV.

USBEK to RHEDI, at Venice.

THE Libertines here maintain an infinite number of women of pleasure, and the bigots as many Dervises : these Dervises take three vows, of obedience, poverty, and chastity. They say the first is best kept : as to the second, I will assure thee it is very little minded ; and I leave thee to judge of the third.

But as rich as these Dervises are, they will never resign the notion of poverty : sooner would our glorious sultan renounce his sublime and magnificent titles : they are much in the right of it : for this name of poverty keeps them from the thing.

The physicians, and some of these Dervises, whom they call confessors, are always here either too much esteemed, or too much despised ; though I am told the heirs are better pleased with the physician than the confessor.

I was the other day in a convent of these Dervi-

ses : one of them, a man venerable for his white hair, accosted me very civilly ; and having shewn me the whole house, led me into the garden, where we fell into discourse. My good father, said I, what is your office in the community ? Sir, replied he, with an air of much satisfaction at my question, I am a casuist. Casuist, cries I ! all the time that I have been in France, I never heard a word of that employment. How ! do not you know what a casuist is ! hearken to me then ; I will give you a notion of it that shall satisfy you to the full. There are two kinds of sins ; the mortal, which absolutely exclude a man from paradise ; and the venial, which indeed are offensive to God, but do not provoke him so highly as to deprive us of beatitude : now, our whole art consists, in cleverly distinguishing between these two sorts of sins ; for, excepting just a few freethinkers, all the Christians would willingly go to paradise ; but most of them would gladly purchase it at as cheap a rate as they can. When a man knows what sins are mortal, he takes care to avoid all those, and his business is done : there are but few that aspire to a mighty high degree of perfection ; and so, not being ambitious, they do not much trouble themselves about the chief places : they just take care to squeeze into paradise, and if they get but in, it is all they desire. These are men that gain heaven by violence, and that say to God : O Lord, I have fulfilled the conditions most rigorously ; thou canst not refuse to keep thy promise ; as I have done no more than just what thou requiredst of me, I do not expect thou shouldst grant any thing more than thou promisedst.

You find, Sir, we are a very necessary sort of folks. Yet this is not all ; you shall hear other-guests matters than those. It is not the action that

makes the crime ; it is the knowlege of the person that commits it : he that does evil, and can believe it not to be so, may set his heart at ease : and as there are a vast many actions which are equivocal in their nature, a casuist may give them a small degree of goodness which they have not, by reckoning them to be of that sort ; and provided he can make the man believe they have no venom, it really takes all the venom out of them.

I have here let you into the secret of a trade which I am grown old in ; I have shewed you the niceties of it : there is a turn to be given to any thing, though it seems ever so little capable of it." Father, says I, this is mighty well : but how do you make up the matter with heaven ? If the grand Sophi had such a man as you in his court, that should serve him as you serve God, making distinctions in his commands, teaching his subjects in what cases they must obey them, and how far they may violate them ; he would impale him out of hand. With this I bowed to my Dervise, and left him, without staying for an answer.

Paris, the 23th of the Moon

Maharram, 1714.

L E T T E R LVI.

RICA to RHEDI, at Venice.

PARIS, my dear Rhedi, abounds with variety of trades. There you shall have a man so obliging, as to come and offer you, for a small piece of silver, the art of making gold.

Another promises you, that you shall lie with the spirits of the air, if you will live only thirty years without conversing with a woman.

You may meet with diviners so cunning, as to tell you your whole life, provided they have but had one quarter of an hour's discourse with your servants.

There are some dextrous women that make virginity a flower which dies and revives every day; and is gathered the hundredth time with more pain than the first.

There are others, that by the power of their art can repair all the injuries of time, restore the fading beauty of a complexion, and even call back a woman from the greatest age to the most tender youth.

All these people live or endeavour to live, in a city which is the mother of invention.

The revenues of the citizens cannot possibly be farmed out; they consist in nothing but wit and ingenuity: every one has his particular talent, which he makes the best market of that he can.

He that would go about to number all the men of the law, that gape after the revenue of some mosque, might as well count the sands of the sea, or the slaves of our monarch.

Vast numbers of masters of languages, arts and sciences, teach other people what they know nothing of themselves; and this talent is very extraordinary: for it requires no great capacity to teach what one understands; but a man must have a fine genius indeed, to instruct another in a thing he himself is wholly a stranger to.

It is impossible to die here any otherwise than suddenly: death has no way to exercise his dominion, but by surprise, in this country: for in every corner you have people that have infallible remedies for all distempers that can be imagined.

All the shops are spread with invisible nets, in which the chaps are all caught: however one sometimes gets out of them tolerably cheap; a spruce girl in a shop shall wheedle a man for a whole hour together, to get him to buy a few tooth-picks.

Every body departs from this city, with more caution about him than when he came to it: by having squandered away part of your wealth to others, you learn to keep the rest: the only advantage which strangers get in this enchanting city.

Paris, 10th of the Moon

Saphar, 1714.

L E T T E R LVII.

RHEDI to USBEK, at ***.

I WAS the other day in a house where there was a circle of people of all sorts: I found the whole talk in the possession of two old women, who had laboured in vain the whole morning to make themselves young again. Aye, aye, says one of them, the men of these days are quite different from those we saw in our youth. They were polite, well-bred, complaisant; but the rudeness of these is intolerable. Aye, every thing is changed for the worse, cried a man that seemed crippled with the gout: times are not now what they were forty years ago: every body then was healthy; they walked about; they were gay; they loved nothing but laughing and dancing: now all the world is insufferably dull and heavy. A moment afterwards, the conversation fell upon politics: Zounds, says an old lord, the state cannot be said now to be governed at all: shew me such a minister now-a-days as monsieur Colbert: I was thoroughly ac-

quainted with that monsieur Colbert : he was my particular friend ; he always ordered my pension to be paid me before any body ; what rare order the finances were in then ! Every body was easy ; but now, Blood, I am ruined. Sir, then spoke up an ecclesiastic, you talk of the most miraculous days of our invincible monarch : can any thing be more glorious than what he did in those times to root out heresy ? And do you reckon the abolition of duels for nothing ? said another man that had not spoke a word yet, with great satisfaction. Mind that remark, whispers another in my ear : that man is charmed with the edict against duelling, and observes it so religiously, that about six months ago he was caned for above half an hour, rather than infringe it.

It is my opinion, Ulbek, that we never judge of things but with a private view to ourselves. I am not surprized that the negroes should paint the devil of the most glaring whiteness, and their gods as black as a coal ; that the Venus of some nations should have breasts hanging down to her very thighs : and, lastly, that all idolaters have represented their gods with a human figure, and given them all their own inclinations. It has been said with good reason, that if the triangles were to make a god they would give him three sides.

My dear Ulbek, when I see men that crawl upon a poor atom, the earth, which is no more than a point in the universe, set themselves up directly for the models of providence, I know not how to reconcile so much extravagance with so much insignificancy.

Paris, the 14th of the Moon

Saphar, 1714.

LETTER LVIII.

USBEK to IBBEN, at Smyrna.

THOU askest me if there are any Jews in France?

Know, that wherever there is money, there are Jews. Thou enquirest what they do here? Just what they do in Persia: nothing can be more like a Jew of Asia, than a Jew in Europe.

They shew among the Christians, as well as among us, an invincible obstinacy for their religion, even to madness.

The Jewish religion is an old trunk, which has produced two branches that have covered the whole earth, I mean, Mahometism and Christianity: or rather it is a mother that has brought forth two daughters who have stabbed her with a thousand wounds: for, in point of religion, the nearest relations are the greatest enemies. But as ill usage as she has received from them, she nevertheless values herself greatly upon having produced them: she makes use of them both to take in the whole world, while she with her venerable great age takes in all ages.

The Jews therefore look upon themselves to be the fountain of all holiness, and the foundation of all religion: on the other hand, they take us to be rebellious Jews.

If the change had been made by slow degrees, they think they might easily have been seduced: but as it was brought about at once, and in a violent manner; as they know the day and hour of both their births; they despise us, because faith can be measured by ages, and stick close to a religion co-eval with the world itself.

They never enjoyed such a calm in Europe as they now live in. The Christians began to lay aside that untolerating spirit, which used to sway them : the Spaniards are sensible how much they have lost by driving the Jews out, and the French by vexing of Christians, whose belief differed a little from that of the prince. They are now convinced that the zeal for the progress of a religion is very different from the devotion she requires ; and that to love and observe her, there is no manner of necessity for hating and persecuting those who do not.

It were to be wished our Mussulmans would reflect as seriously upon this point as the Christians, that we might in good earnest make peace between Hali and Abubeker, and leave God to decide which of those holy prophets is the greatest : I would have them honoured by acts of veneration and respect, and not by vain preferences ; our business is to strive to deserve their favour, whatever place God may have assigned them ; whether at his right hand, or beneath the footstool of his throne.

Paris, 18th of the Moon

Saplar, 1714.

LETTER LIX.

USBEK to RHEDI, at Venice.

I WENT the other day into a famous church, called Notre Dame : while I was admiring this noble structure, I had an opportunity of discoursing with a churchman, who was drawn thither by curiosity as well as myself. Our conversation fell upon the ease and quiet of his profession. ‘ Most people, said he, envy the happiness of our condition ; and they have

some reason : yet it has its inconveniences : we are not so separated from the world, but that we are called into it upon a thousand occasions, and there our part is very difficult to act.

The people of the world are strangely whimsical : they can bear neither our approbation nor our censures : if we offer to correct them, we are ridiculously impertinent : if we approve them, we act below our character : nothing is so great a mortification, as to think one has given scandal even to the impious. We are therefore forced to observe an equivocal conduct, and to deal with the Libertines, not in a positive character, but by leaving them in an uncertainty how we relish their discourse : it requires a great deal of wit to do this : this state of neutrality is very hard to keep : the men of the world who venture at every thing, who give way to all their flights, and according to their success drive them on or drop them, succeed much better.

This is not all ; that happy quiet state, so much cried up, is not to be preserved when we come into the world. We no sooner appear, but they set us upon disputing : for instance, they oblige us to prove the use of prayer, to a man that does not believe in God ; the necessity of fasting, to another, that has all his life denied the immortality of the soul : the undertaking is laborious, and the laugh seldom runs on our side. Nay more, a certain itch to draw others over to our opinions, torments us incessantly, and is in a manner inseparable from our profession. This, I own, is as ridiculous as it would be for an European to labour, for the honour of human nature, to wash the Africans white. We disturb the state, and plague ourselves, to propagate articles of religion that are not fundamen-

tal; and we are something like that conqueror of China, who drove his subjects to a general revolt, by endeavouring to force them to cut their hair, and pare their nails.

Even our zeal to bring the people directly under our care, to perform the duties of our holy religion, is often dangerous, and cannot be managed with too much caution. An emperor, named Theodosius, put all the inhabitants of a certain town to the sword, even the women and children: afterwards offering to go into a church, a bishop called Ambrosius shut the gate upon him, as a sacrilegious murderer; and in this he did a very heroic action. The emperor having afterwards done the penance that such a crime deserved, and being admitted again into the church, went to seat himself among the priests: the same bishop turned him out, and in this played the part of a fanatic and fool: so true it is, that we ought to be very distrustful of our zeal. What mattered it either to religion, or the state, whether that prince had, or had not, been allowed a seat among the priests?

Paris, the 1st of the Moon

Rebiab 1st, 1714.

LETTER LX.

ZELIS to USBEK, at Paris.

THY daughter having attained her seventh year, I thought it time to carry her into the inner apartments of the seraglio, and not wait till she was ten years old before I gave her into the keeping of the black eunuchs. We cannot too soon restrain a

young creature from the liberties of infancy, and give her a holy education within the sacred walls where modesty has placed her residence.

For I cannot be of the mind of those mothers, who never lock their daughters up till they are just ready to give them a husband ; that rather condemn them to the seraglio, than consecrate them in it ; making them by violence embrace a way of life, which they ought to have inspired them with a love of by use. Are we to expect every thing from the power of reason, and nothing from the silent persuasion of habit ?

It is in vain to talk to us of the subordination which nature has placed us in : it is not enough to make us sensible of it, we should be made to practise it, that it may support us in that critical time, when the passions begin to grow, and stir us up to independence.

If we were tied to you only by our duty, we might sometimes forget that ; if by our inclination, a stronger might rise in us. But when the laws give us to one man, they forbid us all others, and put us as far out of their reach, as if we were at a hundred thousand leagues distance from them.

Nature, industrious in the favour of the men, was not satisfied with giving desires to them ; she implanted them in us too, that we might be the animated instruments of their happiness : she sets us in the flame of the passions, that they might live easy : if they ever come out of their insensibility, she has allotted us to bring them into it again, though we can never taste the happy state we place them in.

Yet, Usbek, do not imagine that thy condition is preferable to mine : I have felt a thousand pleasures here, which thou hast no notion of : my imagination has continually laboured to shew me the value

of them : I have lived, whilst thou hast only languished.

In the very prison where thou hast confined me, I am more free than thou : redouble thy cautions to have me watched, I shall yet enjoy thy inquietudes : and thy suspicions, thy jealousy, and thy uneasiness are so many proofs of thy dependance.

Go on, my dear Usbek ; have me watched night and day : nay, do not confide in the ordinary precautions : increase my happiness, by securing thy own ; and know I fear nothing but thy indifference.

From the seraglio of Ispahan the second of the
Moon Rebiab 1st, 1714.

LETTER XLI.

RICA to USBEK, at ***

I THINK thou intendest to spend thy whole life in the country. I was to have lost thee but for two or three days, and here is a fortnight gone since I saw thee : it is true, thou art in a charming house ; thou hast company suited to thy temper ; thou reasonest at ease : there needs no more to make thee forget the whose universe.

For my part, I lead much the same life that I did when thou wast here : I launch forth into the world, and endeavour to know it : my mind loses by degrees all that was left in it of the Asiatic, and bends easily to the European manners. It does not appear so strange to me now, to see five or six women in the same house with as many men ; and I begin to think it is no such ill mixture.

I may say, I knew nothing at all of women till I

came hither : I have seen more of their nature here in a month, than I should have done in thirty years in a seraglio.

Among us, all people's characters are uniform, being all forced : we do not see them as they are, but as they are obliged to be : in that slavery both of the heart and mind, we hear nothing speak but fear, which has but one language ; and not nature, which expresses herself so many different ways, and appears under so many various shapes.

Dissimulation, an art so necessary, and so much praised among us, is here unknown : every thing is spoke out, heard, seen : the heart appears as much to view as the face : in their manners, in virtue, nay, in vice itself, there is something open and undisguised.

To please the women here, requires a certain talent different from that which pleases them most : it consist in a kind of trifling or toying in the mind, that amuses them very agreeably, in that it seems to promise them every moment, what cannot be performed but in too long intervals.

This trifling, naturally made for the toilets, seems to have formed the general character of the whole nation : they trifle at council ; they trifle at the head of their armies ; they trifle with ambassadors : no profession seems ridiculous, but in proportion to the gravity it takes upon it ; a physician would not be half so much laughed at, if his habit were less doleful, and if he did but kill his patients after a trifling toying method.

Paris, the 10th of the Moon

Rebiab 1st, 1714.

LETTER LXII.

The Chief of the black eunuchs to USBEK, at Paris.

I AM in a perplexity not to be described, most magnificent lord : the seraglio is in the most terrible disorder and confusion that can be imagined : war reigns among thy wives : thy eunuchs are divided : nothing is to be heard but complaints, murmurs, and reproaches : my remonstrances are despised : every thing seems lawful in this time of anarchy, and I have now nothing but an empty title in the seraglio. There is not one of thy wives but what thinks herself above all the rest by her birth, her beauty, her wealth, her wit, or thy love ; and upon one of those titles claims all the respect : I at length begin to lose that unwearied patience, with which yet I have not been able to please therit : my prudence, nay, my complaisance, a virtue so rare and uncommon in the post I hold, have been useless.

Shall I lay before thee, magnificent lord, the occasion of all these disorders ? It is all in thy own heart, and in thy tenderness towards them. If thou didn't not with-hold my hand ; if instead of remonstrances, thou gavest me the power of chastisements ; if, instead of suffering thyself to be softened with their complaints and tears, thou wouldest but send them to weep before me who am never softened, I should quickly fashion them to the yoke they are to bear, and soon break their prudent independent humours.

Being taken away at fifteen years of age from the most remote parts of Africa, my native country, I was first sold to a master who had above twenty wives or concubines. Judging, by my gravity and taciturn-

sity, that I was fit for the seraglio, he commanded that I should be made completely so; and I underwent an operation painful at first, but happy for me in the end, as it brought me to the ear and confidence of my masters. I was introduced into the seraglio, which was quite a new world to me: the chief eunuch, who was the severest person in my life I ever saw, governed therein with an absolute sway. Not a word was ever heard of strifes and quarrels: a profound silence reigned throughout: all those women went to bed, and rose, exactly at a certain hour all the year round: they entered the baths one after another, and came out at the least signal that we gave them: at all other times they were generally shut up in their chambers. He had one rule, which was to keep them wonderfully neat, and it is impossible to express his nicety and care in this particular: the least refusal of obedience was punished without mercy. It is true, he would say, I am a slave, but it is to a man who is your master as well as mine: I only make use of the power he has given me over you: it is he that punishes you, and not I: I only lend my hand. Those women never entered my master's apartment without they were called: they received that favour with joy, and were excluded from it without murmuring: in short, I who was the meanest of the blacks in that peaceful seraglio, was a thousand times more respected than I am in thine, where I bear the chief command.

As soon as ever this chief eunuch found out my genius, he had his eye upon me; he gave my master a character of me as one capable of pursuing his schemes, and succeeding him in the post he held: he did not mind my tender age; he thought my attention to his example would serve me instead of experience. To make short, I grew so fast into his confidence, that he

made no scruple to intrust me with the keys of those tremendous places which he had so long guarded; It was under this great master that I learned the difficult art of ruling, and formed myself to the maxims of an inflexible government : I studied the hearts of women under his tuition : he taught me to make advantage of their weakness, and not to be shaken by their haughty airs. He often took delight in seeing me exercise them, and drive me to the utmost verge of obedience ; he then brought them back again by degrees, and made me seem for a time to give way myself. But it was worth while to see him in those moments, when they were driven to the very point of despair, between prayers and reproaches ; he bore their tears without the least concern, and was highly delighted with this sort of triumph. This, he would say with an air of satisfaction, is the true way of governing women : their number nevers gives me the least perplexity : I could manage all those of our mighty monarch with the same ease. How can a man hope to captivate their hearts, if his faithful eunuchs have not first subdued their minds ?

He had not only a firm resolution, but also a great deal of penetration : he read their very thoughts, and saw through all their dissimulations : their studied looks, and fictitious countenances, never imposed upon him : he knew all their most private actions, and their most secret words : he made use of some to betray others, and took pleasure in rewarding the least discovery. As they never presumed to come near their husband, but when they were summoned ; the eunuch called just which he pleased, and directed his master's choice according to his own views ; and this preference was always the reward of some secret revealed : he had convinced his master that it was necessary to good order, that he should

have this privilege of election, in order to add weight to his authority. This was the method of government, magnificent lord, in a seraglio which I believe was the best regulated of any in Persia.

Untie my hands : allow me to make myself obeyed, One week shall restore order out of all this confusion : it is no more than what thy glory requires, and thy security demands.

From the seraglio of Ispahan, 9th of the Moon Rebiab 1st, 1714.

L E T T E R XLIII.

USBEK, to his wives at the seraglio at Ispahan.

I HEAR that the seraglio is all in confusion, and that it is filled with civil broils and divisions. What did I recommend to you at my departure but peace and good understanding ? You promised me obedience ; was it with intent to deceive me ?

It is you that would be deceived, if I were minded to follow the advice of the chief eunuch, or if I would use my authority to compel you to live according to my exhortations.

I know not how to use those violent methods till I have tried all others : do therefore, for your own sakes, what you would not do for mine.

The chief eunuch has great reason to complain : he says you have no manner of regard to him. How can you reconcile this behaviour with the modesty of your condition ? Has not he the care of your virtue in my absence ? Is he not the depositary of that sacred treasure ? But the contempt you shew him is a certain proof, that those, who are employed

to keep you within the bounds of honour, are troublesome and distasteful to you.

Alter your conduct, I desire you; that I may another time reject the proposals made to me, contrary to your liberty and ease.

For I would willingly make you forget that I am your master, and remember me only as your husband.

Paris, 5th of the Moon
Chahban, 1714.

LETTER LXIV.

RICA to ***

MEN here apply themselves very close to the sciences; but I know not whether they are very learned. He, that doubts every thing as a philosopher, dares deny nothing as a theologian: this contradictory man is always well satisfied with himself, provided you agree about qualities.

The predominant passion or rather fury of most of the French is, to be thought wits; and the predominant passion of those who would be thought wits, is to write books.

And yet there is nothing so ill contrived: nature seems wisely to have provided that the follies of men should pass away, but books perpetuate them. A fool ought to be satisfied with having teased those who lived at the same time with him: but he is for going further, and is resolved to plague the generations to come: he is resolved to make his impertinence triumph over oblivion, which he might have enjoyed as well as his grave: he will have posterity know that such a one lived, and all future ages be informed that he was a fool.

Of all authors there is none I despise more than the compilers who forage far and wide for scraps of other mens works, which they piece into their own, like so many dabs of green turf in a flower-garden : they are not a whit superior to those that work in a printing-house, who distribute the types, which being put together make a book, toward which they furnished nothing but manual labour. I am for having original authors reverenced : and, in my judgment, it is a sort of prophanation to drag, as it were, out of their sanctuary, pieces of their works, and expose them to a contempt which they deserve not.

If a man has nothing new to say, why does not he hold his tongue ? what have we to do with these double employments, that is, reading the same thing twice ? but I will give a new order. You are an ingenious man ; that is to say, you come into my library, and put undermost the books that are a-top, and uppermost those that were at the bottom : your performance is a master-piece.

I write to thee *** upon this subject, because I am out of all patience with a book I have just put away, which is so voluminous that it seems to contain the whole circle of sciences ; but has split my brain, without teaching me any thing. Adieu.

Paris, 17th of the Moon

Chahban, 1715.

LETTER LXV.

IBBEN to USBEK, at Paris.

THREE ships are arrived here without bringing me any manner of news of thee. Art thou sick, or dost thou take delight in making me uneasy ?

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If thou lovest me not in a country where thou hast no ties, what wouldst thou do in the middle of Persia, and in the bosom of thy family ! But perhaps I deceive myself : thou art too amiable not to find friends where-ever thou goest : the heart is an alien nowhere : it is free of all cities : how can a well-disposed mind avoid forming engagements ? I confess to thee, I reverence friendships that are of ancient standing ; but I am not displeased with contracting new ones in all places.

Whatever country I happen to be in, I have lived as if I had been to end my days there : I have had the same fondness for virtuous people ; the same compassion, or rather tenderness, for the unfortunate ; the same esteem for those whom prosperity has not spoiled. This is my humour, Uzbek ; wherever I meet men, I shall find friends.

There is here a certain Guebre, who, I think, next to thee, possesses the first place in my heart : he is probity itself : some private reasons have obliged him to retire to this city, where he lives an easy life upon the gains of an honest traffic, together with his wife whom he loves. The whole course of his life is remarkable for generous actions : and though he seeks to be obscure, there is more of heroism in his soul, than in that of the greatest monarchs.

I have often talked to him concerning thee ; I have shewed him all thy letters ; I observe he is pleased with them ; and I already perceive thou hast a friend that is unknown to thee.

Underneath thou wilt find his principal adventures ; though he was loth to write them, he could not refuse them to my friendship, and I commit them to thine.

HISTORY of APHERIDON and ASTARTE.

I WAS born among the Guebres, of a religion which is perhaps the oldest in the world. I was so unhappy to be smitten with love, before I was endued with reason. I was hardly six years old when I could not live without my sister : my eyes were always fixed on her ; and if she left me but a moment, she was sure to find them drowned in tears when she came back : each hour added no less to the increase of my love than to my age. My father, surprized at so strong a sympathy, would gladly have married us, according to the antient custom of the Guebres, introduced by Cambyses : but the fear of the Mahometans, under whose yoke we live, hinder those of our nation from thinking of those holy alliances, which our religion not only permits but commands ; and which are such natural images of the union already formed by nature.

My father thus finding it would be of dangerous consequence to follow my inclination and his own, resolved to extinguish a flame which he thought but just beginning, but which was already at its utmost period : he feigned a voyage, and took me along with him, leaving my sister in the hands of one of his female relations ; for my mother had been dead two years. I will not now tell thee the distraction I was in upon his parting : I embraced my sister, who was drowned in tears : but I shed none ; for grief had made me, as it were, insensible. We arrived at Tefflis ; and my father, after he had committed my education to one of our relations, left me there, and returned home.

Sometime afterwards I understood, that, by the interest of a friend of his, he had got my sister into the

king's Beiram, to wait upon a sultana : had I heard the news of her death, I could not have been more struck : for, besides my despair of ever seeing her again, her entrance into the Beiram had rendered her a Mahometan ; and she could no longer look upon me without horror, according to the prejudice of that religion. Mean-while, not being able to live longer at Tefflis, weary of life, and hateful to myself, I returned to Ispahan. My first words were bitter to my father : I upbraided him with putting his daughter into a place where none can enter without changing their religion. You have brought down upon your family, says I to him, the wrath of God, and of the sun that illuminates you : you have done worse than if you had stained the elements : for you have stained your daughter's soul, which is no less pure : I shall die of grief and love : but may my death be your only punishment ! Upon these words I went forth ; and for two years I past my life in looking on the walls of the Beiram, and considering the place where my sister might be ; exposing myself every minute to be murdered by the eunuchs who keep guard about those awful places.

At length my father died ; and the sultana whom my sister served, seeing her every day encrease in beauty, because jealous of her, and married her to an eunuch, who was passionately desirous of her ; by this means my sister got quit of the seraglio, and with her eunuch took a house at Ispahan.

It was upwards of three months, before I could get to speak to her : the eunuch, the most jealous of mortals, finding some excuse or other to put me off from day to day. At length I was admitted into his Beiram, and he caused me to speak to her through a grated window : the eyes of a lynx could not have discovered her through so many habits and veils as

she had on; and I knew her again by nothing but the sound of her voice. What was my emotion, when I saw myself at once so near her, and so far off! I put a restraint upon myself, for I was watched. As for her, I thought she dropped some tears. Her husband went about to make some pitiful excuses, but I treated him as the vilest of slaves. He knew not what to do, when he saw I spoke to my sister in a language which was unknown to him; it was the antient Persian, which is our sacred language. How, sister, says I to her, is it then true that you have quitted the religion of your forefathers? I know that when you entered into the Beiram, you could not but make profession of Mahometism: but tell me, could your heart consent, like your mouth, to forsake a religion which permits me to love you? And for whom, pray, do you quit that religion, which ought to be so dear to us? for a wretch still marked with the chains he used to wear; who, were he a man, would be the last of men? Brother, said she, the man you speak of is my husband: I must honour him, as worthless as he appears to you; and I shall be the last of women, if —— Ah! sister, says I to her, you are a Guebre: he neither is nor can be your husband: were you a true believer, like your forefathers, you would look upon him as a monster. Alas, said she, at how great a distance does that religion discover itself to me! I scarce know the precepts of it, when I was obliged to forget them. You see, the language I speak to you in, is no longer familiar to me, and that I have all the difficulty in the world to express myself: but be assured, the remembrance of our childhood pleases me; that ever since, I have had nothing but counterfeit joys; that no day has past but have thought on you; that you had a greater hand in my marriage than you think.

for ; and that the only thing that determined me to it was the hope of seeing you again : but I tremble to think how much further pain that day will give me, which has already given me so much ! I see you are quite beside yourself ; my husband foams with rage and jealousy ; I shall never see you again ; doubtless, I speak to you for the last time of life ; in which case, brother, it would be of no long continuance. Here she melted into tears ; and finding it impossible to proceed, she left me the most afflicted man that ever was.

Three or four days after, I asked to see my sister : the barbarous eunuch would have hindered me : but, besides that these sort of husbands have not the same authority over their wives as others have, he was so distractedly fond of my sister, that he could refuse her nothing. I saw her again in the same place, and the same equipage, accompanied by two slaves ; which made me have recourse to our peculiar language. Sister, said I to her, how comes it that I cannot see you, without finding myself in such a dreadful situation ? These walls that inclose you, these bolts, and bars, and iron grates, these horrible guardians that watch you, make me almost mad : how have you lost the sweet liberty that your ancestors enjoyed ? Your mother, who was so chaste, gave her husband no other surety for her virtue, than that virtue itself : they both lived happy in a mutual confidence of each other : and the simplicity of their ways was to them a treasure, a thousand times more precious, than this false splendor which you seem to enjoy in this sumptuous house. In losing your religion, you have lost your liberty, your happiness, and that precious equality, which is the honour of your sex. But, what is still worse, you are no woman, for you cannot be so ; but the slave of a slave, who has been de-

graded from humanity. Dear brother, said she, speak with respect of my husband, and the religion I have embraced: according to which religion it is a crime in me to hear you speak, much more to speak to you. How, sister, said I to her passionately, do you think this religion to be a true one? Ah! said she, sighing, how well would it be for me were it not! I make too great a sacrifice to it, not to believe it to be true; and if my scruples ----- Here she was silent. Yes, sister, your scruples, whatever they be, are well grounded. What can you expect from a religion, which makes you miserable in this world, and leaves you no hope in the other? Consider, ours is the antientest in the whole world; it has always flourished in Persia: it took beginning with that empire, whose origin is beyond knowledge: it was chance alone that introduced Mahometism: that sect was established not by the means of persuasion, but by the sword: were but our natural princes enabled, you would again see the worship of the antient Magi predominant. Look back to those remote ages, and you will find it all magism; nothing of the mahometan sect, which thousands of years afterwards was not so much as dreamed of. But, said she, though my religion were of a more modern date than yours, it is at least of a purer kind, since we worship God alone; whereas you likewise worship the sun, the stars, fire, and even the elements. I find, sister, the Musulmans have taught you to asperse our holy religion; we neither worship the stars nor the elements; neither did our forefathers ever worship them; nor did they ever erect temples to them, or offer sacrifices to them; they only paid them an inferior sort of religious worship due to the works of the Creator, and the manifestations of the deity. But, sister, I beseech you, in the name of God, who enlightens us,

accept of this sacred book ; it is the book of our legislator Zoroaster : read it without prejudice : admit into your heart the rays of light which will shine upon you in the reading of it : call to mind your fore-fathers, who so long honoured the sun in the holy city of Balk : lastly, bear me in mind, me, who expect neither repose, happiness, nor life, but from your change. Here, in the utmost disorder, I quitted her ; and left her by herself, to decide the most important affair I could have in life.

I returned again two days afterwards ; I spoke not one word to her ; I silently waited the sentence either of life or death. You are beloved, brother, says she, and by a Guebre : I have had a terrible conflict ! but Gods ! what difficulties does love remove ! how easy am I now ! how relieved ! I now fear nothing but to love you too much ; I can put no bounds to my love ; but it is a lawful excess. Ah, how well does this suit the situation of my heart ! But you who have found a way to break the chains which my mind had forged to itself ; when will you break those that tie up my hands ? From this moment I am yours ; let me see by your readiness in accepting me, how much you value the present I make you. Brother, I believe I shall die in your arms the first moment I have you in mine. I were impossible fully to express the joy I felt at these kind words : I did believe, and actually saw myself in an instant the happiest of all men : I saw upon the verge of accomplishment, all the wishes I had been forming for five-and-twenty years ; I saw vanish away all the uneasinesses which had rendered life so painful to me : but after I had a little dwelt upon these pleasing ideas, I found I was not so near my happiness as I at first fancied ; even though I had surmounted the greatest obstacle of all. The vigilance of her keepers was

to be surprized ; I durst not trust any body with the secret of my life. She and I were to do the whole work : if I miscarried, I ran the hazard of being impaled ; but I thought impalling a trifle to miscarrying. We agreed that she should send to me for a clock her father had left her, into which I was to convey a file to cut the bars of the window that looked into the street, as likewise a rope-ladder ; after which I was to forbear visiting her, but should go every night under her window, to wait till she could put her design in execution. Fifteen whole nights I spent without seeing any soul, because no favourable opportunity had offered itself. The sixteenth I heard a saw at work : now and then the sound ceased, and in those intervals my fears were inexpressible. At last I saw her fasten the rope, by which she slid down into my arms : I was so transported, that I thought not of danger ; I remained a considerable time without stirring from the place : I led her out of the city, where I had a horse ready for her : I placed her behind me, and made my best of my way out of a place that might have been so fatal to us. We arrived before day at a house of a Guebre, in a desert place, where he lived by himself in a frugal manner, by the labour of his hands : we did not think fit to tarry here, and by his advice we entered into a thick forest, where we took up our quarters in the hollow of an old oak tree, till such time as the noise of our escape was at an end. We lived unseen in this by-place, incessantly repeating our vows of love to each other, till we could find an opportunity to be married by some Guebre priest, according to the ceremonies prescribed by our holy books. Sister, said I to her, how holy is this union of ours ! Nature has joined our souls ; and our holy law will soon do as much by our hands. At length came a priest to put an end to our

amorous impatience : he performed, in the house of a peasant, all the ceremonies of marriage : he gave us his benediction, and a thousand times wished us the same vigour as Gustaspes, and the holiness of Ho-hooraspes. We soon afterward left Persia for our own security, and retired into Georgia. There we lived a year, every day more and more delighted with each other. But, my purse beginning to fail me, and being more apprehensive of want for my sister's sake, than my own, I quitted her, to go and look out for some relief of our relations. Never was so tender a parting : but my journey was not only fruitless but fatal : for, finding on the one hand, our whole estate confiscated, and, on the other, my relations in a manner unable to relieve me, I obtained no more money than to defray the charges of my return. But how shall I describe the affliction I was in, not to find my sister ! Some days before my arrival, the Tartars had made an incursion into the town where she was, and finding her beautiful, carried her off, and sold her to some Jews that were going into Turkey ; they left behind them only one little girl, whom she was brought to bed of some months before. I followed these Jews, and overtook them three leagues from the place : my prayers, my tears were ineffectual : they asked me thirty Tomans for her ransom, and resolved not to abate the least of their demand. After I had applied myself to every body, and implored the protection both of Turkish and Christian priests, I addressed myself to an Armenian merchant : to him I sold my daughter and myself too, for thirty-five Tomans : I went to the Jews, and gave them thirty Tomans, and the other five I carried to my sister, whom I had not yet seen. You are now at liberty, sister, says I to her, and I may embrace you ; see here I have brought you

five Tomans : I am sorry the purchase of me could fetch no more money. How ! have you sold yourself ? Yes, says I to her. Unhappy man, what hast thou done ! was I not miserable enough before, but you must still labour to make me more so ? Your liberty was my consolation, and your slavery will now bring me to the grave. Ah, brother, how cruel is your love ! But where is my daughter, that I see her not ? I have sold her too, says I. We both dissolved into tears, and had not power to speak. After this I went to wait upon my master, and my sister was there almost as soon as I. She fell on her knees. I come to ask of you slavery, as others do liberty, said she : take me, I shall fetch you more money than my husband did. Upon which followed such a conflict as forced tears even from my master. Alas, poor man, said she, did thou think I could accept of my liberty at the expence of thine ? Sir, behold here two wretches that must die if you part us : I am your slave, I make myself over to you as your property ; pay me ; perhaps the money, together with my services, may one day obtain from you what I dare not presume to ask of you ; it is your interest not to part us, and depend upon it, that his life is at my disposal. The Armenian was a good-natured man, and was moved at our misfortunes. Serve me both of you with fidelity and zeal, said he, and in a year you shall have your liberty : I see you both deserve a better fate : if when you are free, you are as happy as you deserve to be ; if fortune should smile on you, I am certain you will make me amends for the loss I shall sustain. We both embraced his knees, and followed him in his voyage. We assisted each other in the labours of servitude, and I was always overjoyed to perform the tasks that were allotted to my sister.

At length the year was up: our master was as good as his word, and set us at liberty. We returned to Tefflis, where I found an old friend of my father's, who practised physic in that place. He lent me some money, which I laid out in merchandise, and fell into a way of trade. Some affairs afterwards called me hither to Smyrna, where I settled, and have lived six years, enjoying the most agreeable and charming society in the world: love and union reign in my family, and I would not change my condition to be the greatest king in the universe. I was so happy as to meet once more with that Armenian merchant to whom I owe my all, and have done him very signal services.

Smyrna, the 27th of the Moon
Gemmadi 1st, 1714.

LETTER LXVI.

RHEDI to USBEK.

I WENT the other day to dine with a man of the long robe, who had often invited me. After we had talked over a great many things, says I to him; Your trade seems to me to be a very slavish one, Sir. Not so slavish as you think it, answered he: as we manage it, it is only an amusement. How do you mean? Is not your head always filled with other mens busines? Are you not continually taken up with things that do not in the least concern ye? things that cause no concern in us, you mean, cried he: and this is the reason why it is not so fatiguing a trade as you thought it was. Finding him take the thing in so easy a manner, I proceeded: Sir, says I to him, I have not yet seen your study: I do

not know how you should, says he, for I have never a one. To raise money to buy this office, I sold my library ; and the bookseller, who had it, left me nothing but my book of accompts : nor am I at all sorry I parted with the others : we judges puff not ourselves up with vain knowlege : what have we to do with so many volumes of the law ? almost all cases are hypothetical, and out of the general rule. But, Sir, says I to him, is not that occasioned by your turning them out of the general rule ? for, in short, why are there such things as laws in any nation, if they are not applied ; and how can they be applied, if they are not known ? Were you but acquainted with the courts of judicature, replies the magistrate, you would not talk as you do : we have our living books, the counsellors : they work for us, and take upon themselves to instruct us. And do not they likewise take upon themselves to deceive you too, replied I ? you would do well to guard against their ambuscades ; they have arms with which they attack your equity, and it is fit you should have some to defend it : you ought not to go into the thick of a battle open-breasted, among men that are armed up to the chin.

Paris, the 1st of the Moon
Chahban, 1714.

LETTER LXVII.

USBEK to RHEDI, at Venice.

COULDST thou ever have imagined, I should grow a better metaphysician than I used to be ? yet so it has happened, and thou wilt be convinced of it, when thou hast undergone this inundation of my philosophy.

The wisest philosophers, that have meditated upon the nature of God, have concluded him to be a being infinitely perfect; but they have abused this notion of him most wretchedly; they have mustered up all the various perfections that man is capable of possessing or imagining, and loaded the idea of the deity with them all: without considering that these attributes are even contrary, and cannot subsist in the same person without destroying one another.

The poets of the west say, that an antient painter intending to draw the goddesses of beauty, got together all the finest Grecian women, and took from each her particular charm, of which he composed a picture that resembled the most lovely of all the goddesses. If a man from hence should conclude that she must therefore be fair and brown, her eyes grey and black, and that she was both easy and untractable; he would be thought very ridiculous.

God often wants a perfection, that would cause in him a greater imperfection: but he is never limited by any but himself; he is his own necessity: thus though God is all-powerful, yet he cannot violate his promises, nor deceive mankind. Very often too this inability does not lie in him, but in relative things, and that is the reason he cannot change their essences.

So that there is no need to wonder some of our doctors should have presumed to deny the infinite pre-science of God, upon this foundation, that it was incompatible with his justice.

As daring as this notion may seem, metaphysics favour it wonderfully. According to the principles of that, it is impossible for God to foresee such things as depend upon the determination of free agents; because that which never happened, does not exist, and consequently cannot be known: for nothing,

having no properties, cannot be perceived : God cannot read in a will which is not in being, nor see in the soul a thing which does not exist in her : for, till she has taken her determination, the action which she is determined upon is not in her.

The soul is the author of her own determination : but there are some occasions in which she is so irresolute, that she knows not which way to determine. Sometimes she does it, merely to make use of her liberty ; so that God cannot see this determination before-hand, neither in the action of the soul, nor in the action of the objects upon her.

How should God foresee things that depend upon the determination of free agents ? He could foresee them but two ways : by conjecture ; which in the very terms is a contradiction to infinite prescience : or else he must foresee them as necessary effects infallibly attending a certain cause which must infallibly produce them, which is yet more contradictory : for the soul must be free by the very supposition ; and yet in the fact she would be no more so, than one billiard ball is free to lie still when struck by another.

Yet do not imagine I would set bounds to the knowledge of God. As he makes his creatures act just according to his own will, he knows every thing that he thinks fit to know ; but though it is in his power to see every thing, yet he does not always make use of that power : he generally leaves the creature at liberty to act or not to act, that it may have room to be guilty or innocent. It is in this view that he renounces his right of acting upon her, and directing her resolution : but when he is minded to know any thing, he always does know it ; because he need only will that it shall happen as he sees it, and direct the resolution of his creature according to his will. Thus he fetches the things which shall happen

from among those which are merely possible, by fixing by his decrees the future determinations of the minds of his creatures, and depriving them of the power he hath bestowed upon them of acting or not acting.

If we may presume to make use of a comparison in a thing which is above all comparisons ; a monarch does not know what his ambassador will do in an affair of importance : if he thinks fit to know it, he need only give him directions to behave so or so ; and he may be assured the thing will happen according to his direction.

The Alcoran and the books of the Jews constantly rise up against the doctrine of absolute prescience : in them, God every where seems ignorant of the future determinations of the mind of man ; and this seems to be the first truth that Moses taught to the world.

God places Adam in the terrestrial paradise, upon this condition that he shall not eat of a certain fruit ; an absurd precept from a being that knew the future determination of the soul : for, in short, could such a being promise his favours upon conditions, without indeed bantering the creature to whom the promise is made ? It is just as if a man that was sure of the taking of Bagdad, should tell another ; I will give you a thousand crowns if Bagdad is not taken ; would it not be a poor scurvy jest ?

Paris, the last of the Moon
Chahban, 1714.

LETTER LXVIII.

ZELIS to USBEK, at Paris.

SOLIMAN, whom thou lovest, is drove perfectly to despair, by an affront which has been lately put upon him. A young desperate blockhead, named Suphis, for three years together sought his daughter in marriage : he seemed pleased with her person, by the account and description he had of it from women that had seen her in her infancy ; the portion was agreed upon, and every thing went on without obstruction. Yesterday, after the first ceremonies, the young maid issued forthon horse-back, attended by her eunuch, and covered from head to foot, according to custom : but when she came to her intended husband's house, he shut the door upon her, and swore he would not take her without they enlarged her fortune. The relations flocked in to make up the matter ; and, after much persuasion, prevailed upon Soliman to make his son in-law a small present. At length the ceremonies being all compleated, they brought the young woman to the bed, not without great struggling : but an hour afterwards, the madman got up in a violent fury, cut her over the face in several places, swearing she was no maid, and sent her back to her father. It is impossible to be more confounded than he is with this injury : many affirm the poor girl is innocent. Fathers are very unhappy in being liable to such affronts : if my child should meet with such treatment, I believe I should die with grief.

From the seraglio of Fatme, 9th of
the Moon Gemmadi 1st, 1714.

LETTER XLIX.

USBEK to ZELIS.

IPITY Soliman, and so much the more, as his misfortune is without remedy, and his son-in-law has only made use of the privilege allowed him by the law. I own I think the law very severe in thus exposing the honour of a family to the caprice of a madman : it is a jest to say there are certain rules to come at the knowlege of the truth ; that is an old error which we are now cured of, and our physicians give unanswerable reasons for the uncertainty of those proofs. The very Chirstians look upon them to be chimerical, though they are plainly established in their sacred books, and their antient legislator made the innocence or condemnation of all women to depend upon it.

I hear with pleasure the care thou takest of the education of thine : God grant that her husband may find her as pure and as beautiful as Fatima : that she may have ten eunuchs to watch her : that she may be the honour and ornament of the seraglio, for which she is decreed : that she may always have gilded cielings over her head, and rich tapestry under her feet : and to complete my wishes, may my eyes behold her in all glory !

Paris, the 5th of the Moon
Chalval, 1714.

LETTER LXX.

RICA to USBEK, at ***

I WAS the other day in company, where there was a man hugely pleased with himself. In a quarter of an hour he had decided three questions in morality ; four problems in history ; and five points in natural philosophy : I never came near so universal a decider : his mind was never suspended by the least doubt. We left the sciences , we talked of the news of the times ; he decided the news of the times. I had a mind to catch him, and I said to myself I will get into my strongest intrenchment ; I will take shelter in my own country. I talked about Persia : but I had scarce spoke four words but he contradicted me twice, upon the authority of Tavernier and Chardin. Good God, quoth I to myself, what a strange fellow is this ! He will be better acquainted with the streets of Ispahan than I am, presently ! However I soon came to my resolution : I held my peace, I let him alone, and he decides on to this day.

Paris, 8th of the Moon,
Zileade, 1715.

LETTER LXXI.

RICA to ***

THE populace is an animal which sees and hears, but never thinks. It is always either in a lethargy or in a fury ; and is continually going and coming from one of these conditions to the other, without ever knowing from whence it set out.

I have heard talk in France of a certain governor of Normandy, who being desirous to make himself considerable at court, would ever and anon stir up an insurrection himself, and then as suddenly quell it again.

He afterwards owned that the biggest insurrection never cost him, at most, above half a Toman. His way was to get to some tavern a parcel of scoundrel rascally fellows to open the cry to the rest of the town, and so on to the whole province.

This brings to my mind a letter which in the late troubles of Paris, one of the generals of that city wrote to a friend of his.

' Three days ago I ordered the troops of the city
 ' to make a sally, but they were repulsed with loss.
 ' However, I am very confident I shall easily repair
 ' this small misfortune; I have got half a dozen songs
 ' and ballads ready to be published, which I do not
 ' in the least doubt will restore things to an æquili-
 ' brium. I have made choice of some very clear
 ' voices, which proceeding from the cavity of certain
 ' very strong lungs, will strangely move the populace;
 ' they are set to a tune which has hitherto had a mer-
 ' vellous effect.

' If this will not do, it has been resolved in coun-
 ' cil, that a print shall be published, representing a
 ' gallows, and Mazarin hanging at it: and if the con-
 ' jecture of affairs should ever so little require it, our
 ' next resource will be to order the engraver to break
 ' him on the wheel.

' It is very providential for us, that he does not
 ' speak good French; nay, he murders it to that de-
 ' gree, his affairs must needs decline. We do not
 ' omit to make the people take notice, what a ridi-
 ' culous pronunciation he has. Some days ago we
 ' animadverted upon a grammatical blunder of his,

so egregious, that it afforded matter for several drolls and interludes, in all the cross-ways and chief places of concourse throughout the city and country.

' I leave you to judge after this, whether the people are in the wrong to be so inveterate against him, and to turn the name of Mazarin into a common appellative for all such beasts as carry or draw burdens.

' Our music has so enraged him upon the topic of original sin, that to avoid the mortification of seeing his adherents reduced to half their number, he has been forced to dismiss all his pages. I am, etc.

Paris, the 9th of the Moon

Zilcade, 1715.

L E T T E R LXXII.

USBEK to ***

WHAT can be the motive of these exorbitant grants made by princes to their courtiers; do they think to make them the more devoted to their service, and attach them the more firmly to their persons? They are already theirs as much as they can be: and, besides, if they gain some of their subjects by purchasing them, they must for the same reason lose a great many others by impoverishing them.

When I reflect on the condition of princes, always beset with greedy and insatiable men, I cannot but pity them; and I pity them yet more, when they have not the courage to refuse such beggars, as are never to be gratified but at the expence of those who beg nothing.

I never hear of their liberalities, the favours and pensions which they are so profuse of, but I give myself up to a thousand reflections; and croud of ideas pour in upon my mind, and I fancy I hear the following proclamation published.

' The indefatigable courage, and unwearied perseverance of some of our richest subjects in asking pensions of us, having incessantly exercised our royal munificence, we have at last yielded to the innumerable multitude of petitions which they have presented to us, and which have hitherto been the greatest solicitude of the throne. They have set forth to us, that since our accession to the crown they never once failed to appear at our levee, that we have always seen them on our way wherever we went, immovable as so many landmarks, and that they have clambered over the tallest shoulders to look at our serenity: we have likewise received several petitions from some of the fair sex, humbly praying us, to take into our serious consideration that they are very chary of conversation, and hard to be pleased: nay, some very superannuated ones have begged us, shaking their heads, to consider that they were the ornament of the court of the kings our predecessors; and that if the generals of their armies have made the state formidable by their martial exploits, themselves have rendered the country no less renowned by their intrigues. For these reasons, being willing to treat the petitioners graciously, and to grant all their requests, we have ordered as follows:

' That every husbandman or farmer, having five children, shall daily retrench a fifth part of the bread he gives them: enjoining, however, each father of a family to proportion this diminution, in as exact and equal a manner as possible.

• We expressly forbid all such as apply themselves
• to the culture of their estates themselves, or who
• let them out upon lease, to bestow thereupon any
• repairs whatsoever.

• We forbid from this time forwards, all persons of
• ungentle and mechanic employments, who have
• never been at the levee of our majesty, to buy a
• suit of clothes for themselves, their wives, or chil-
• dren, oftner than once in four years; strictly charg-
• ing them, likewise, to forbear those little banquet-
• tings and merry-makings, they have been accustomed
• to in their own families, or with their friends, on
• the chief festivals of the year.

• And for as much as we have received informati-
• on, that most of the burghers of our principal
• towns are entirely taken up with providing settle-
• ments for their daughters, which said daughters
• have no otherwise recommended themselves in our
• state, but by a melancholy, troublesome, and un-
• easy modesty; we ordain that the fathers do for-
• bear marrying their said daughters, till, having at-
• tained the age limited by the ordinance, they con-
• strain and compel their said fathers to marry them
• off. We forbid all our magistrates to take care of,
• or provide for, the education of their sons. Given
• at —— the —

Paris, the 11th of the Moon
Zilcade, 1715.

LETTER LXXIII.

USBEK, to * * *.

A MAN of wit is generally very difficult in the matter of society: he chuses but few persons to converse with; he is tired with that great number of people whom he is pleased to call bad company; it is impossible for him not to shew his distaste a little; and this makes them all his enemies, every mother's child of them.

Sure of pleasing whenever he has a mind to it, he very often neglects the doing it at all. He is inclined to criticism and censure, because he sees more things than another, and has a quicker and truer sense of them.

He almost always ruins his fortune, because his wit furnishes him with more ways of doing it.

He miscarries in his undertakings, because he hazards a great deal: his view, always extensive, takes in objects which are at too great a distance, not to mention that in the birth of a project, he is not so intent on the difficulties which arise from the thing, as on the remedies proceeding from himself, and which he fetches from his own breast alone.

He overlooks little things, on which, however, depends the success of almost all great affairs.

On the contrary, a man of slow parts lets nothing escape him, that he can any how turn to his advantage; he is very sensible he cannot afford to lose any thing by negligence.

The man of slow parts, most commonly, runs away with the general approbation. To him people love to be giving, and are overjoyed to take from the other. Whilst envy vents itself on the one, and no-

thing shall be pardoned him ; the other's defects, be they ever so many or great, shall be all supplied by favour ; vanity declares herself on his side.

But if men of wit have so many disadvantages, what shall we say of the hard condition of the virtuous ?

I never think of these unhappy men, but I call to mind a letter from one of them, to a friend of his, in the following terms.

SIR,

' I am one of those who are every night taken up with viewing, through a thirty foot telescope, those vast bodies which roll over our heads ; and when I have a mind to recreate myself, I take my little microscopes, and observe a cheese-mite or a hand-worm.

' I am not rich, and have but one chamber, in which I dare not so much as make a fire, because I keep my thermometer there, and the external heat would make the glass rise. Last winter I had like to have been starved to death with cold ; and though my thermometer, which was at the lowest degree, gave me warning that my hands would be frozen quite up, I did not mind it, but went on in my old track, and had the consolation of being exactly apprized of the most insensible alterations of the weather all last year.

' I am not very communicative, and of all the people whom I see, I do not know a single person ; but there is a man at Stockholm, another at Leipsick, and another at London, whom I never saw, and most certainly never will, with whom I keep so exact a correspondence, that I hardly miss a post without writing to them.

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‘ But though I am acquainted with no body in my neighbourhood, I am in so bad a repute that I shall be at length forced to quit it. Five years ago, I was rudely insulted by one of my female neighbours, for having made a dissection of a dog she said belonged to her : a butcher’s wife that was by took her part, and whilst the latter loaded me with foul language, the other flung stones at me, conjointly with doctor *** who was with me, and who received a terrible blow on the frontal and occipital bone, whereby the seat of his reason was very much shaken.

‘ Ever since that time, when any dog happens to run astray at the street’s end, it is presently concluded that he is fallen into my hands. A wealthy burgher’s wife having lost a puppy, which she said she loved more than her children, came the other day, and fell into fits in my chamber about her four-footed favourite, and not finding him, she got a warrant, and had me before a magistrate. I believe I shall never be delivered from the malice of those vexatious women, who with their yelping voices are incessantly deafening my ears, with the funeral oration of all the automatons, which have died for these ten years past. I am, etc.

Formerly the virtuosi were all accused of magic; nor do I wonder at it; every one said to himself: I have carried the talents of nature as far as they can go; and yet a certain virtuoso has the advantage of me, he must certainly deal with the devil.

Such sort of accusations being now exploded, another turn has been taken, and a virtuoso can hardly escape the charge of irreligion or heresy: the people’s absolving him signifies nothing, the wound is made, it will never be thoroughly closed up; it is always a

sore place to him ; an adversary shall come thirty years afterwards, and say modestly to him ; God forbid I should say that what you was accused of was true ; but you was obliged to defend youself : and thus they turn against him his very justification. If he writes a history, and does it with any degree of freedom and impartiality, he brings a thousand persecutions upon himself : the magistrate shall be stirred up against him, about a thing done a thousand years ago ; and his pen shall be confined, if it is not venal.

More happy, however, than those base wretches, who prostitute their conscience for a poor pension ; who are not paid above a half-penny a piece for all their impostures, take them one with another ; who overturn the constitution of empires, diminish the rights of one potentate, augment those of another, give to princes, take from the people, revive antiquated pretensions, soothe the passions which are in vogue, and the vices which are on the throne, imposing on posterity so much the more villainously, as it has fewer means of invalidating their evidence.

But what shall I say of this age, when I see a learned and ingenious man at the mercy of a bookseller ? when I behold a man that deserves to have statues erected to him, necessitated to devote his lucubrations, and mortgage his brains, to raise the fortune of a sharping tradesman ? His works might have been useful to posterity ; but they are precipitated through avarice, and the end entirely subjected to the means.

But it is not enough for an author to have suffered all these affronts, it is not enough for him to have been in a continual uneasiness about the success of his work, at length it sees the light, this work which has cost him so much pains ; it draws quarrels upon him from every quarter ; and how can he avoid them ?

He held an opinion, he supported this opinion by his writings, he did not know that a man two hundred leagues off had said the contrary; and yet here is a war declared!

However, he may hope to obtain some consideration, you will say. No; at most he is only esteemed by such as have bent their studies to the same sort of science as he has done. A philosopher has a sovereign contempt for a man, whose head is loaded with historical facts: and he, in his turn, is looked upon as an enthusiast by one who has a good memory.

As for those who make profession of an arrogant and supercilious ignorance, they would have all mankind buried in the same oblivion wherein they will be buried themselves.

A man to whom a talent is wanting, makes himself amends by despising it: he removes that obstacle which was between merit and him, and thereby finds himself on a level with the man whose pen he dreads.

To conclude the case of the scholar: to an uncertain and equivocal reputation, must be added, privation of pleasure, and loss of health.

Paris, 10th of the Moon,
Zilcade, 1715.

LETTER LXXIV.

RICA, to ***.

I HAVE heard much talk of a kind of court of judicature, called the FRENCH ACADEMY: there is certainly no tribunal upon the face of the earth so little respected as this is; for the judges no sooner make a decree, but the people reverse it, and impose laws even on them, which they are obliged to obey.

It is not long since, in order to fix their authority, they put out a code of their decisions : this child of many fathers was in a manner old as soon as born ; and though he was legitimate, yet a bastard, that popt into the world before him, had like to have stifled him in the birth.

These judges have nothing in the world to do but to prate incessantly. Panegyric enters insensibly into all their bables ; and as soon as ever they initiate a member into their mysteries, the dæmon of flattery takes possession of him, and never after leaves him till he leaves the world.

It is a body with forty heads, all crammed with tropes, metaphors, and antitheses ; their mouths no sooner open, but out flies an exclamation ; their ears expect always to be entertained with cadence and harmony. As for eyes, they are out of the question ; their business is talking, not seeing. This body cannot yet stand well on its legs ; for time, its mortal enemy, makes it totter every moment, and pulls down whatever it built up. Its hands were formerly said to be somewhat gripping : I shall say nothing to this point, leaving it to be settled by those who know more of the matter than I do.

These are chimeras not to be found in our country ; the Persian genius is not turned for such out-of-the-way establishments : we always follow nature in the simplicity of our customs, and hate an affected singularity of manners.

Paris, 27th of the Moon

Zilhage, 1715.

LETTER LXXV.

RICA to USBEK, at ***

SOME days ago a man of my acquaintance says to me : I promised to introduce you into some good families in Paris ; I will now carry you to a great lord, that acts up to his character the best of any man in the kingdom.

What is your meaning by that, Sir ? Is he more polite, more affable than others ? Not so, says he. Oh, I understand you : he makes every body that comes near him know by all his actions the superiority he has over them : if this be it, I have no business to go with you : I already own the bill ; he is my superior as much as he thinks fit.

However, go I must ; and I found a little man so fierce ; he took a pinch of snuff with so much state, he blowed his noise so unmercifully, and spit with so much flegm ; he made much of his dogs in a manner so offensive to every body, that I was never weary of admiring at him. Good God ! says I to myself, if when I was in the court of Persia, I acted thus, I acted like a very great fool ! We must have been of a very ill disposition, Usbek, to have offered a hundred little insults to people that came every day to our houses to shew us their good-will ; they knew very well we were above them ; and though they had not, our favours must every day have convinced them of it. Having no occasion to use arts to make ourselves respected, we did every thing that we thought would make us beloved : we were accessible to the meanest : in the midst of those honours, which usually harden the heart of man, they always found ours sensible to every generous impression ; they saw no-

thing but our souls above them ; we descended to their very wants. But when it was necessary to support the majesty of our prince in public ceremonies ; when occasion offered to create a respect towards our nation in strangers ; or, lastly, when in extreme perils, we were to enflame the courage of our soldiers ; we rose a hundred times higher than we before descended ; we called back all our fierceness into our countenances, and were sometimes thought to have acted up to ourselves.

Paris, 10th of the Moon

Saphar, 1715.

L E T T E R LXXXVI.

USBEK to RHEDI, at Venice.

I MUST needs own to thee, I have not found among the Christians that lively persuasion of their religion, which is observable in the Mussulmans : there is a great difference here between profession and belief, between belief and conviction, between conviction and practice. Religion is not a cause of holiness but of contention, in which every body engages : courtiers, soldiers, nay, the very women stand up against the clergy, calling upon them to prove what they are resolved not to believe. Not that they have taken this their resolution upon reason, or have given themselves the trouble to examine the truth or falsehood of the religion which they reject : their rebellious necks have just felt the yoke, and they have shook it off without knowing what it was. Neither are they more fixed in their incredulity than in their faith ; they live in a continual flux and reflux, which

is perpetually driving them from the one to the other. One day one of them plainly told me : I believe the immortality of the soul by fits : my opinions absolutely depend upon the temperature of my body ; according as I have more or fewer animal spirits ; as my stomach digests well or ill ; as the air I breathe is subtle or gross ; as the meats I feed on are light or heavy, I am a Spinozist, Socinian, a Catholic, an Atheist, or a Bigot. When the physician is at my bed-side, my confessor has me at an advantage. I take care not to let religion afflict me when I am in health ; but I allow it to comfort me when I am sick : when I have nothing more to hope for from this world, religion steps in and wins me with her promises of the next ; I am even willing to give myself over to her then, and to die in hope.

A long while ago the Christian princes set free all the slaves in their dominions, saying, that Christianity renders all men equal. It is true, indeed, this act of devotion was of great service to them in their secular concerns, as it humbled the lords by withdrawing the common people from their obedience : afterwards they made conquests in countries, where they found it convenient to have slaves ; then they allowed the buying and selling of them, forgetting that principle of religion which before had touched them so close. What shall we call this ? Truth at one time, error at another. Why do not we act like these Christians ? We are very silly to refuse fine settlements, and easy conquests in happy climates, because they have not water pure enough for us to wash in according to the principles of the Holy Alcoran.

I return thanks to God Almighty, who sent Hali his great prophet, that I profess a religion which raises its followers above all human views, and which

is pure as heaven, from whence it was brought down.

Paris, 13th of the Moon

Saphar, 1715.

LETTER LXXVII.

USBEK to his friend IBBEN, at Smyrna.

THE laws are furious in Europe against those that kill themselves : they are in a manner put to death a second time : they are dragged ignominiously through the streets : they are marked with infamy : their goods are forfeited.

These laws, Ibben, appear to me very unjust. When I am oppressed with grief, with misery, and contempt, why should I be hindered from putting an end to my sufferings, and be inhumanly deprived of a remedy which I have in my own hands ?

Why must I be forced to labour for a society, which I am willing to throw up my share in ? Why must I, in my own despight, stand to a compact made without my knowlege ? Society is founded upon mutual advantage . but when it grows burdensome, to me, what should keep me from renouncing it ? Life was given me as a favour ; I may consequently give it back, when it is no longer so. The cause ceasing, the effect must cease of course.

Would the prince have me continue his subject, when I reap none of the advantages of subjection ? Can my fellow-citizens desire so unequal a partition, as convenience to them, and despair to me ? Will God, quite different from all other benefactors, oblige me to receive mercies that make me wretched ?

I am bound to obey the laws, when I live under the laws: but when I am dead, what power have they over me? But, say they, you disturb the order of providence. God hath united your soul to your body, and you part them: you therefore oppose his designs, and rebel against his will.

What does this mean? Do I disturb the order of providence, when I only alter the modifications of matter, and make square a bowl which the first laws of motion, that is to say, the laws of creation and preservation, made round? No, doubtless: I only use the right which was bestowed on me; and in this sense I may disturb all the parts of nature, just according to my own fancy, without being chargeable with rebelling against providence.

When my soul is parted from my body, will there upon that account be less order and symmetry in the universe? Do you believe the new modification will be less perfect, or less dependent upon the general laws? or that the world will lose the least particle, or the works of God be less great, or, to speak more properly, less immense?

Do you think my body, when changed into an ear of corn, a worm, a piece of turf, will be changed into a work less worthy of nature? Or that my soul, disengaged from all her terrestrial clogs, will become less sublime?

All these notions, my dear Ibben, have no other spring but our pride; we do not see our own insignificance; and, come what will, we are resolved to be something of consequence in the universe, and to make a figure in the creation. We fancy that the annihilation of a being of our perfection would almost ruin all nature: and we do not conceive that one man either more or less in the world, what do I say, one, all mankind in general, a hundred millions of

worlds like ours, are no more than a little minute atom, which God perceives only because of the immensity of his faculties.

Paris, the 15th of the Moon
Saphar, 1715.

LETTER LXXVIII.

RICA to USBEK, at ***

I SEND thee a copy of a letter wrote by a Frenchman now in Spain, to a friend here; I believe thou wilt be glad to see it.

I HAVE been now six months rambling over Spain and Portugal; and I have lived among a people that, despising all other nations, do the French alone the honour to hate them.

Gravity is the shining part of the character of both these nations; it is manifested chiefly two ways; by spectacles, and by mustachios.

The spectacles infallibly demonstrate the wearer to be a man consummate in the sciences, and buried in profound reading, to such a degree as to have weakened his sight by it: and every nose herewith adorned, or saddled, may safely be concluded to be the nose of a deep scholar.

As to the mustachio, it is venerable in itself, independently of any consequences; not but that great advantages have often been drawn from it, to the service of the prince, and the honour of the nation; as particularly by a famous Portuguese general in the Indies †, who being in want of money, cut off one of his mustachios, and sent it to the inhabitants of

† Juan de Castro.

Goa, desiring them to lend him twenty thousand pistoles upon that pledge : they readily accepted the security, and he afterwards, with great honour, redeemed his mustachio.

We may easily imagine that a people so grave and flegmatic are not wholly free from vanity : and really they have their share. They usually ground it upon two points of very considerable importance. They, that live on the continent of Spain and Portugal, are hugely lifted up in their hearts, if they are what they call old Christians, that is, if they are not descendants from those whom the inquisition in these latter days has persuaded to embrace the Christian religion. They who live in the Indies are no less puffed up, when they consider that they have the exalted merit of being, as they say they are, men with white skins. There never was in the seraglio of the grand signior a sultana so vain of her beauty, as is the most wretched old rascal of the tawny whiteness of his skin, when he is in a town of Mexico sitting at his door with his arms a-cross. A man of his consequence, so perfect a creature, would not work, for all the treasures in the universe, nor, by a vile mechanic industry, expose the honour and dignity of his complexion.

For you must know, that when a man has attained a certain merit in Spain ; as for instance, when he can add to the qualifications above-mentioned, that of being the proprietor of a long sword, or has learned of his father the art of fetching a cursed hoarse sound out of an ill-tuned guitarre ; he has done working : his honour is concerned in the repose of his members. He, that sits upon his breech ten hours a-day, is just as good a man again as he that is idle but five ; for, it seems, honour is to be acquired in a chair in this country.

But though these invincible enemies to labour have the appearance of a philosophical tranquillity, yet there is nothing of it in their hearts; for they are eternally in love: they are certainly the cleverest fellows in the world at dying with passion under their mistresses window; and a Spaniard, without a cold, must resign all his pretensions to gallantry.

They are, first and foremost, bigots, and secondly jealous. They would not upon any account trust their wives to the attacks of a soldier disabled with wounds, or to a magistrate decrepit with age; but they will lock them up with a fervent novice that looks meekly down to earth, or a robust Franciscan that lifts up the eggs of his sanctified eyes to heaven.

They are thoroughly acquainted with the weak side of the fair sex; they will not let so much as their heel be seen, for fear they should be caught by the foot; they know the imagination always goes forwards, and that nothing stops it in its way: it arrives at its journey's end, and sometimes its arrival is prepared for before-hand.

It is every where allowed, that the torments of love are great: they are much greater to the poor Spaniards: the women indeed relieve their pains; but they only change one for another, and a long and grievous remembrance of an extinguished passion always sticks by them.

They have some pretty pieces of politeness, which in France would be taken for a banter: for instance, a captain never canes a common soldier till he has asked his leave; and the inquisition never burns a Jew, without making abundance of excuses to him.

The Spaniards, that are not burnt, are so fond of the inquisition, that it would really be a pity to rob them of it: I would only have another set up, not against heretics, but heresiarchs, who ascribe to some

idle monkish practices, the same virtues as to the seven sacraments ; who adore every thing which they should only revere ; and who are so wonderous devout, that they are hardly Christians.

You may possibly find wit and good sense among the Spaniards ; but look for none of it in their books : see but one of their libraries ; romances on one side, and school-divines on the other : you would swear the collection had been composed and made by some secret enemy to human reason.

The only good † book they have is that which shews the ridiculousness of all the rest.

They have made vast discoveries in the new world, and are not yet acquainted with their own continent : they have ports and bridges in their very rivers as yet unknown to them ; and in their mountains ‡ whole nations which they never heard of.

They brag that the sun rises and sets in their dominions, but they do not tell you that in his course he meets with nothing belonging to them, but vast wide-extended, waste lands, and countries uninhabited. I am, *etc.*

I should not be displeased, Usbek, to see a letter written to Madrid by a Spaniard travelling in France : I fancy he would take a good hearty revenge for his own nation. What a wide field is here for a man of a thoughtful stegmatic turn ! I imagine he would begin the description of Paris thus :

There is a house here where they confine mad-folks : one would think it should be bigger than all the rest of the city : no, the remedy is very scanty, considering the multitude of the distempered. I suppose the French, knowing how much they are run down by their neighbours, lock up some mad-men,

† Don Quixot.

‡ Biscay, *etc.*

to make people believe that those who are abroad are not so.

There I leave my Spaniard. Adieu, my dear Uſbek.

Paris, 17th of the Moon

Saphar, 1715.

L E T T E R . LXXXIX.

Uſbek to Rhedi, at Venice.

MOST of the legislators were men of limited capacities, whom chance raised to the government of others, and who consulted hardly any thing but their prejudices and caprices.

They seem to have been ignorant of the greatness and dignity of their work : they busied themselves in making a set of boyish institutions, wherein it is true they adapted themselves to meaner understandings, but disgraced themselves with men of good sense.

They plunged themselves into needless circumstances, and ran into particular cases ; which is the mark of a narrow genius, seeing things only by parts, and not capable of taking a general view of the whole.

Some affected to make use of a language different from the vulgar ; the most absurd thing in nature, in a composer of laws : for how should people obey what they do not understand ?

They often, without any necessity, abolished those which they found established to their hands ; thereby involving the people in the disorders inseparable from innovation.

It is true, there are such strange turns, rather in the hearts than the heads of men, that it is some-

times necessary to alter certain laws. But the case is rare; and, when it happens, should be touched with a tender hand: so many solemnities should be observed in doing it, and so many precautions used, that the people may of themselves conclude the laws to be very sacred, when so many formalities are requisite to abolish them.

Oftentimes they made them too subtle, being led rather by logical ideas, than by natural equity. Afterwards they were found too severe; and from a spirit of equity it was thought necessary to deviate from them; but this remedy was a new evil. Let the laws be what they will, they should always be adhered to, and looked upon as the public conscience, to which that of private persons ought always to conform.

It must however be confessed, that some of them had a consideration which shewed much wisdom; such as their giving to parents a very great authority over their children. Nothing is a greater relief to the magistrate; nothing keeps the public tribunal so clear of offenders; in a word, nothing better secures the peace of a state, wherein morals always make better citizens than laws.

This paternal power is of all powers that which is least abused; it is the most sacred of all magistracies; it is the only one that does not depend upon compacts; nay, it was before them.

It is observed, that in those countries where most rewards and punishments are trusted in the hands of parents, the families are best governed; the fathers are a symbol of the Creator of the universe, who, though he can lead men by his love, yet thinks fit to work upon them also by the motives of hope and fear.

I cannot conclude this letter, without taking no-

tice to thee of the whimsical cast of mind of the French. They are said to have retained an infinite number of things out of the Roman laws, which are at least useless, if not worse ; but they did not copy after them in paternal authority, which was settled by the Romans as the first lawful magistracy.

Paris, 18th of the Moon

Saphar, 1715.

L E T T E R LXXX.

The Chief cunuch to USBEK, at Paris.

YESTERDAY some Armenians brought to the seraglio a young Circassian slave, which they wanted to sell. I carried her into the private apartments ; I undressed her ; I viewed her with the eyes of a judge, and the more I viewed her, the more beauties I found in her. A virgin bashfulness seemed desirous to hide them from my sight ; I perceived with how much reluctance she obeyed ; she blushed to see herself naked even before me, who, exempt from those passions that can give an alarm to virtue, am, under the empire of that sex, inanimate, the minister of modesty in the freest actions, and whose chaste looks can inspire nothing but innocence.

As soon as I judged her worthy of thee, I humbly bent my eyes to earth ; I threw over her a robe of scarlet ; I put a ring of gold upon her finger ; I prostrated myself before her feet ; I adored her as the queen of thy heart ; I paid the Armenians ; I buried her from all human eyes. Happy Usbeb, thou art the possessor of more beauties than are to be found in all the palaces of the east. What pleasure will it be to thee at thy return to find theyself master of the

most charming women in Persia, and to see the Graces revive in thy seraglio, as fast as time and possession labour to destroy them !

From the seraglio of Fatme,
first of the Moon
Rebiab 1st, 1713.

LETTER LXXXI.

USBEK to RHEDI, at Venice.

SINCE I have been in Europe, my dear Rhedi, I have seen many a different sort of government : it is not bere as in Asia, where the rules of policy are every where the same.

I have often studied within myself, to find which of all these governments is most conformable to reason ; and I imagine that to be the most perfect, which attains its end with least difficulty : consequently that which conducts men in a way the most suitable to their inclinations, is the most perfect.

If the people are as obedient under a mild, as under a severe government ; the former is to be preferred, because it is most conformable to reason, and that severity is a foreign motive.

Be assured, my dear Rhedi, that in any state, punishments being more or less cruel, do not create a greater obedience to the laws. In a country where the punishments are moderate, they are as much dreaded, as where they are tyrannical and inhuman.

Let the government be gentle or severe, they always punish in several degrees ; the greatness of the penalty is proportioned to the greatness of the crime. Our imagination moulds itself naturally to the manners of the country where we live : a week's im- pri-

sionment, or a slight fine, makes as great an impression upon the mind of an European, educated under a mild government, as the loss of an arm can intimidate an Asiatic. They adapt such a degree of a fear to such a degree of punishment; and every man proportions it his own way: a Frenchman shall be driven to despair with strange notions of infamy upon being condemned to a punishment, that would not rob a Turk of a quarter of an hour's sleep.

Besides, I have not found that good order, justice, and equity, are better observed in Turkey, Persia, or the Mogul's country, than in the Republics of Holland, Venice, and even England: I do not believe we commit fewer crimes, or that the horror of the punishments frightens us into greater submission to the laws.

On the contrary, I think there is a constant source of injustice and vexation in the middle of those despotic states.

Nay, I take the prince who is himself the law, to be less powerful there than elsewhere.

I observe that in those moments of rigour, there are always tumultuous motions, in which no-body has the command: and that when once a violent authority is despised, no-body has enough to recover it.

That the very despair of impunity confirms and increases the disorder.

That in such states the revolts are never inconsiderable; and that there is no medium between murmurs and insurrections.

That great events there have no need of being prepared by great causes: on the contrary the least accident produces a great revolution, which is many times as little expected by those who make, as by those who suffer it.

When Osman the Turkish emperor was deposed, none of those who were concerned in the attempt ever thought of committing it : they only begged, in a supplicating way, to have some grievance redressed ; a voice, which no-body ever knew, came forth from among the crowd by chance, the name of Mustapha was pronounced, and immediately Mustapha was emperor.

Paris, 2d of the Moon
Rebiab 1st, 1715.

LETTER LXXXII.

NARGUM, *envoy from Persia in Muscovy, to Usbek, at Paris.*

OF all the nations in the world, my dear Usbek, none ever exceeded that of the Tartars, either in glory or great conquests. This people is truly the lord of the universe : all others seem designed to serve them : they are both the founders and destroyers of empires : in all ages they have given the world proofs of their power : in all ages they have been the scourge of nations.

The Tartars have twice conquered China ; and still hold it under their obedience.

They rule the vast countries which form the empire of the Mogul.

Masters of Persia, they sit upon the throne of Cyrus and Gustaspes. They have subdued Muscovy. Distinguished by the name of Turks, they have made immense conquests in Europe, Asia, and Africa ; and they bear dominion over those three parts of the universe.

And to speak of times more remote ; from among

them issued almost all those nations which over-turned
the Roman empire.

What are Alexander's conquests compared with
those of Genghiscan ?

This victorious nation has only wanted historians to
celebrate the memory of her wonderful acts.

What immortal exploits have been buried in obli-
vion ! What empires founded upon them, which
we are at a loss to trace the beginnings of ! This
warlike nation, wholly taken up with her present glo-
ry, and sure of conquering at all times, never took
pains to signalize herself to posterity, by recording
her past victories.

Moscow, 4th of the Moon

Rebiab 1st, 1714.

LETTER LXXXIII.

RICA to IBBEN, at Smyrna.

THOUGH the French talk very much, yet there
is among them a sort of mute Dervises, called
Carthusians : they say they cut out their tongues up-
on their entering into the convent : and it is very much
to be wished that all the other Dervises would cut off
every thing that their profession renders useless to
them.

And now we are speaking of silent people, there
are some much more singular than those above-menti-
oned, and who have a very extraordinary talent.
These are such as can talk without saying any thing,
and furnish a conversation for two hours together,
and all the while it shall be impossible to come at their
meaning, and consequently to steal from them, or re-
tain a word of what they have said.

These sort of men are adored by the women : but yet
not quite so much as some others, who have been en-

dued by nature with the agreeable talent of smiling à propos, that is, every moment; and of receiving with approbation and pleasure, every thing that proceeds from the mouth of the fair.

But those are the top wits, who can spy a fine thought in every word, and discover a thousand beauties in the most common expressions.

I know others who have had good success in introducing into the conversation things inanimate, and in making their fair peruke, their embroidered coat, their snuff box, their cane and gloves speak for them. It is no bad way to begin, even in the street, with distinguishing one's self by the rattling of our coach, and by thundering at the door with the knocker: this prelude gives a pre-possession in favour of every thing that is to follow: and when the exordium is fine, it renders supportable all the nonsense that comes after, but which, by good fortune, then comes too late.

I can tell thee, these little talents, which are in no esteem among us, are of no small service to those who are so happy as to be masters of them; and a man of good sense makes but a poor figure among such people.

Paris, the 6th of the Moon

Rebiab 2d, 1715.

LETTER LXXXIV.

USBEK to RHEDI, at Venice.

IF there be a God, my dear Rhedi, he must necessarily be just: for were he not, he would be the most wicked and most imperfect of all beings.

Justice is a relation of congruity which is really

found between two things : this relation is always the same, whatever being considers it, whether God, or angel, or lastly man.

It is true, men do not always see these relations : nay, oftentimes when they do see them, they deviate from them, and their own interest is what they always see best. Justice raises her voice : but she has much a-do to be heard amidst the tumult of the passions.

Men may commit injustice, because it is their interest to do it, and they chuse rather to satisfy themselves than others. It is always with an eye to themselves that they act : no body is wicked *gratis* : he will have some reason to sway him ; and that reason is always a reason of interest.

But it is impossible for God ever to commit any injustice : the moment we suppose that he sees justice, he must necessarily follow it : for, as he stands in want of nothing, and is all-sufficient in himself, he would be the most wicked of all beings, because he would be so without getting by it.

Thus, though there were no God, we ought still to love justice ; that is, we should do our endeavours to be like that being of which we have so lovely an idea, and which, if it exists, must be necessarily just. Free though we should be from the yoke of religion, yet we ought not to be so from that of equity.

This, Rhedi, makes me believe that justice is eternal, and does not depend upon human conventions : and if it did depend upon them, it would be a fatal truth, which we should conceal even from ourselves.

We are encompassed with men stronger than we are : they may hurt us a thousand several ways, and generally with impunity. What a comfort is it to us to know that there is in the heart of all those men

an inward principle, that stands up in our behalf, and protects us from their violence !

Were it not for this, we should have reason to be in perpetual dread ; we should pass by a man as by a lion ; and we should never be one moment secure of our lives, estates, or honour.

These thoughts inflame my indignation against those doctors, who represent God as a being that makes a tyrannical use of his power ; who tell us he acts after a manner which we ourselves would not, for fear of offending him ; who accuse him of all the imperfections which he punishes in us ; and, in their contradictory opinions, describe him at one time as a wicked being, and at another as a being that hates wickedness, and punishes it.

When a man examines himself, what a satisfaction is it to find that he has an upright heart ! This pleasure, severe as it is, must fill him with rapture : he sees he is a being as much above those who have it not, as above tigers and bears. Yes, Rhedi, if I was always sure of strictly following that equity, which I have before my eyes, I should think myself the first of men.

Paris, the 1st of the Moon
Gemmadi 1st, 1715.

LETTER LXXXV.

RICA to ***

I WAS yesterday at the hospital of the invalids : if I were a prince, I would rather have been the founder of that charity than have won three battles. There appears in all parts of it the hand of a great monarch. I look upon it as the most sacred place upon earth.

What a sight is it to behold all these victims of their country gathered into one place, who still long only to defend her, and who finding in themselves the same hearts, though not the same strength, complain of nothing but the inability they are under of sacrificing themselves for her a second time !

What can be more affecting than to see these disabled warriours observing in this retirement as exact a discipline, as if they were forced to it by the presence of an enemy; placing their last satisfaction in this picture of the war, and dividing their hearts and minds between the duties of religion and those of the military art !

I would have the names of those that die for their country written and preserved in temples, in registers, that should be, as it were, the fountain of honour and nobility.

Paris, the 25th of the Moon

Gemmadi 10, 1715.

LETTER LXXXVI.

USBEK to MIRZA, at Ispahan.

THOU knowest, Mirza, that some of Cha-Soliman's ministers had formed a design of obliging all the Armenians in Persia to depart the kingdom, or turn Mahometans, from a belief that our empire would always be defiled so long as she fostered those infidels in her bosom.

There had been an end of the Persian greatness, if upon this occasion we had given ear to blind devotion.

No body knows how the thing came to drop ; neither those that made the proposal, nor those that

rejected it, were sensible of the fatal consequences of it: chance did the business of reason and good policy, and saved the empire from a danger more imminent, that it would have been in from the loss of three battles and of two cities.

By banishing the Armenians, they would in one day have rooted out all the traders, and almost all the artificers in the kingdom. I am sure the great Cha-Abas would rather have had both his hands cut off, than have signed such an order; he would have been of opinion, that in thus sending to the Mogul, and the other kings of the Indies, the most industrious of his subjects, he gave them the better half of his dominions.

The persecutions, which our zealous Mahometans raised against the Guebres, constrained them to fly in crowds into the Indies, and deprived Persia of that laborious people so much addicted to tillage, and who alone, by their indefatigable patience, were able to conquer the barrenness of our lands.

There was but one thing more left for bigotry to do, and that was to ruin industry; and then the empire would easily fall of itself, and with it of course that very religion which was thereby intended to be so flourishing.

If we may reason without prejudice, I know not, Mirza, but variety of religions may be useful in a state.

It is observed, that the followers of a religion, which is only tolerated, are generally more serviceable to their country than those who are of the established religion; for, being shut out from all honours, and having no way to distinguish themselves but by their opulence and wealth, they are naturally led to embrace the most painful employments in the society.

Besides, as all religions contain precepts useful to society, the more zealously they are observed, the better. Now, what can be more likely to animate that zeal than the multiplicity of religions?

They are so many rivals that never spare one another's failings. The jealousy descends even to every private member: every one stands upon his guard, and is fearful of doing any thing that may bring a scandal upon his sect, and expose it to the contempt and unforgiving censures of its adversaries.

Accordingly it has always been observed, that a new sect in a state is the surest means of correcting all the abuses of the old.

It is in vain to say that it is the prince's interest not to allow of variety of religions in this kingdom. Tho' all the sects in the world were to get together in it, he would not be at all prejudiced by it; for there is not one but what prescribes obedience, and preaches up submission.

I confess histories are full of religious wars: but do not let us take the thing wrong; it was not the diversity of religions that occasioned these wars; it was the untolerating spirit of that which thought she had the power in her hands.

It was that spirit of proselytism which the Jews caught of the Ægyptians; and which from them was communicated, like an epidemical infection, both to the Mahometans and Christians.

In a word, it was that spirit of enthusiasm, which in its progress can be looked upon as nothing else but a total eclipse of human reason.

For, in short, though there was nothing of inhumanity in forcing the consciences of others; though it occasioned none of those ill effects which spring up from it by thousands; a man must be a fool to offer at it. He that would have me change my reli-

gion, does it, no doubt, because he would not change his own if he were to be forced to it : so that he wonders I will not do a thing, which perhaps he would not do himself for the empire of the universe.

Paris, the 26th of the Moon
Gemmadi 1st, 1715.

LETTER LXXXVII.

RICA to ***

IT seems here as if every family was its own governor ; the husband has but a shadow of authority over his wife ; the father over his children ; the master over his slaves : the law interferes in all differences, and you need not doubt it is always against a jealous husband, a peevish father, or a cross master.

I went the other day to the place where justice is dispensed. In our way to it, we are forced to run the gantlet through whole numbers of young shop-women, that invite you with a deceitful voice. This sight at first is gay enough, but the next objects are very doleful, when you come into the great halls, where you see nothing but men whose habits are more grave even than their looks. At last you enter into the sacred place, where all the secrets of families are revealed, and where the most private actions are brought out into open light.

There a modest girl comes, and confesses the torments of a virginity too long kept, her conflicts, and her sorrowful resistance : she is so far from being puffed up with victory, that she wishes every moment for a defeat ; and that her father may no longer be ignorant of her necessities, she makes them known to all the world.

An impudent wife comes next, and sets forth the insults and provocations she has given her husband, as so many reasons for being parted from him.

With equal modesty another declares, she is weary of having the title of a wife, without enjoying the benefits of it : she openly reveals the mysteries buried in the obscurity of marriage : she desires to undergo the examination of artists, and to be restored by a decree to all the privileges of virginity. Nay, there are some that dare defy their husbands, and publicly challenge them to a combat, which the witnesses and by-standers make so difficult to the man : a trial as disgraceful to the wife that stands it, as to the husband that is defeated by it.

An infinite number of young women, either ravished or debauched, make mankind even much worse than they really are. This tribunal rings with nothing but love. You hear talk of nothing but enraged fathers, abused daughters, perjured lovers, and discontented husbands.

By the law here in force, any child born in marriage is concluded to be the husband's : he may have what reason he will to believe it not to be so ; the law believes it for him, and eases him of his scruples, and the trouble of a thorough inquiry.

In this court the voices are taken by majority : but experience has shewn that it would have been a better way to take them by the minority ; and it is very natural it should be so ; for there are very few just reasoners ; and all the world agrees there are false ones now.

Paris, the 1st of the Moon

Gemmadi ad, 1713.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

RICA to ***

THEY say man is a sociable animal. Upon this foot the French seem to me to have more of the man in them than any people in the world : they seem cut out for nothing but society.

But I have observed among them people who are not only sociable, but who may be called an universal society of themselves. They multiply themselves into every corner, and, in an instant, will people ye the four quarters of a city : one hundred men of this sort shall make a greater show than two thousand other citizens : they might, in the eye of a stranger, repair the devastation of plague or famine. It is a question in the schools, whether one body can at one instant be in different places ; they are a full proof of what the philosophers propose as a doubt.

They are always in a hurry, having upon their hands the important business of asking every body they meet ‘ Where they are going, and where they have been.’

You can never beat it out of their heads, but that it is a necessary piece of good breeding to visit the public every day separately, besides the visits they pay it in gross in places of general resort : but as this latter method is too short, these visits go for nothing in the rules of their ceremonial.

They wear out more doors with knocking at them than the winds and storms. If one were to examine all the porters lists, we should every day find their names murdered in a thousand Swiss scrawls. They spend their days either in attending

upon funerals, in compliments of condolence, or in congratulations of marriage. The king never grants a favour to one of his subjects, but it costs them a coach or chair to wish the person joy. At night they return home to rest themselves after their fatigue, that they may be able next day to resume their laborious task.

One of them died the other day of mere weariness ; and this epitaph was engraved upon this tomb.
‘ Here rests a man that never rested before. He
‘ mourned at five hundred and thirty burials. He
‘ rejoiced at the birth of two thousand six hundred
‘ and fourscore children. The pensions on which
‘ he congratulated his friends, at various times, a-
‘ mount to two millions six hundred thousand livres
‘ *per annum*. The ground he trudged it on foot in
‘ town, to nine thousand six hundred furlongs ; the
‘ walks he took in the country, to thirty-six. His
‘ conversation was amusing. He had a constant stock
‘ of three hundred and sixty-five stories. He was o-
‘ ver and above the master even from his youth of a
‘ hundred and eighteen apophthems extracted from
‘ the ancients, which he brought out whenever he
‘ thought fit to shine. He died in the sixtieth year
‘ of his age. Now, passenger, I conclude ; for
‘ when could I tell thee all that he did, and all that
‘ he saw ?

Paris, the 3d of the Moon
Gemmadi 2d, 1715.

LETTER LXXXIX.

USBEK to RHEDI, at Venice.

LIBERTY and equality reign at Paris. Birth, virtue, nay, even the greatest services in war, do not lift a man above the crowd in which he is confounded. Jealousy about rank is here unknown. They say, the chief man at Paris is he that has the best horses to his coach.

A great man is one that sees the king, speaks to the ministry, has ancestors, debts and pensions. If with all this he can conceal his idleness under an air of business, or a pretended alacrity after pleasure, he thinks himself the happiest of mortals.

In Persia none are great but those on whom our monarch bestows some share in the government. Here there are people that are great by their birth; but they have no manner of interest. Kings act like those nice artificers, who, in the execution of their designs, always make use of the plainest tools.

Favour is the great deity of the French. The prime minister is her high-priest, and offers her many a victim. Those who attend upon him are not clothed in white; sometimes sacrificers, and sometimes sacrificed, they devote even themselves to their idol, together with the whole nation.

Paris, the 9th of the Moon

Gemmadi ad, 1715.

LETTER XC.

USBEK to IBBEN, at Smyrna.

THE desire of glory differs in no respect from that instinct which all creatures have for their own preservation. We seem to extend our being, when we can gain it a place in the memory of other men: it is a sort of a new life got, which is not less dear to us than that we received from heaven.

But as all men are not equally fond of life, so neither are they equally sensible to the impressions of glory. That noble passion is indeed stamped upon all our hearts: but imagination and education mould it a thousand various ways.

This difference, which is observable between man and man, is yet more so between nation and nation.

It may be laid down as a maxim, that in every state the desire of glory increases and decays with the liberty of the subject: glory is never the companion of slavery.

A man of good sense said to me the other day: we are in many respects much more free in France than you are in Persia; and accordingly we are much fonder of glory. This happy delusion makes a Frenchman perform with pleasure and relish, what your sultan obtains from his slaves only by setting eternally in their view rewards and punishments. Therefore among us the prince is jealous for the honour of the meanest of his subjects. There are the most solemn tribunals for maintaining it: it is the sacred treasure of the nation, and the only one which the king is not lord of; for he could not be so without running counter to his own interest. So that if a subject finds himself touched in his honour even by

his prince, either by an unjust preference, or the least mark of contempt ; he immediately leaves his court, and his service, and retires to his own estate. He goes on.

The difference between the French troops and yours is, that the one, being composed of none but slaves naturally cowards, can get over the fear of death only by the terror of greater torments ; which produces in the soul a new kind of terror, which makes it in a manner stupid : whereas the others face danger with delight, and banish fear by a satisfaction which is above it.

But the sanctuary of honour, reputation, and virtue seems to be placed in republics, and in those states where a man may, with safety, pronounce the word, countiy. At Rome, Athens, and Sparta, honour was the only reward for the most signal services. A crown of oak-leaves or laurel, a statue, an inscription, was an immense return for a battle won or a city taken.

There, a man that had performed a noble action, thought himself sufficiently recompensed in the action itself. He could not see one of his countrymen, without feeling the inward satisfaction of knowing himself his benefactor : he reckoned the number of his services by that of his fellow-citizens. Any man is capable of doing a pice of service to another man ; but it is somewhat divine to contribute to the happiness of a whole society.

But must not this noble emulation be entirely extinct in the heart of your Persians, among whom employments and dignities flow only from the monarch's caprice ? Reputation and virtue are there looked upon to be mere imaginary notions, unless attended with the prince's favour, with which alone they spring up and die. One that has the public esteem wholly of

his side, is not sure of not being dishonoured to-morrow : one day beholds him general of an army ; the next, perhaps, the prince debases him into his cook ; and he has no other praise to aim at, but that of dishing up a nice ragoo.

Paris, the 15th of the Moon
Gemmadi 2d, 1715.

LETTER XCI.

USBEK to the same, at Smyrna.

FROM this general passion which the French nation have for glory, there has sprung up in the minds of the people a thing which I know not what to make of, called THE POINT OF HONOUR : it is properly the character of every profession ; but it is more prevailing among the soldiers ; and there it is the point of honour by way of excellence. It would be very hard to make thee conceive what it is : for we have no clear ideas of it.

Formerly the French, and especially the nobility, scarcely followed any other laws but those of this point of honour. These regulated the whole conduct of their lives ; and they were so strict, that it was a penalty worse than death, not only to infringe, but even to elude, the least tittle of them.

When any difference happened, they commonly prescribed but one way of decision, namely, the duel, which cut off all difficulties. But the worst part of the story is, that very often the trial was made between more parties than were really concerned in the affair.

Let a man have ever so little acquaintance with another, he was bound to take part in the dispute, and venture his carcase as much as if he were him-

self in wrath. He always thought himself honoured with so kind a choice, and so distinguishing a preference: and one that would not have given a man four pistoles to save him and his whole family from the gallows, would make no scruple to run the risque of his life for him a thousand times.

This way of trial was ill-contrived enough: for, because one man is stronger or more dextrous than another, it does no follow that he has the better cause.

Therefore the kings have forbidden it upon very severe penalties: but in vain; honour, which will always have dominion, rebels, and owns no laws.

So that the French are in a state of great violence: for, on one hand, the laws of honour oblige a man to revenge himself if he is affronted; and, on the other, justice inflicts the most cruel punishments upon him for doing so. If you follow the laws of honour, you lose your head upon a scaffold: if those of justice, you are driven out for ever from the society of men; so that you have only the unhappy choice either of dying, or being unworthy to live.

Paris, the 18th of the Moon
Gemmadi 2d, 1715.

LETTER XCII.

USBEK to RHEDI, at Venice.

THE monarch that has reigned so long is no more †. He made millions talk of him while he lived; at his death every body was silent. Firm and courageous in his last moments, he seemed to yield to nothing but destiny. Thus died the great Cha-Abas, after having filled the whole earth with his fame.

† He died the first of September, 1715.

Do not imagine that this great event put men here only upon making moral reflections. Every one began to think of his own affairs, and to take all advantages upon this change. The king, great grandson to the deceased monarch, being but five years old, a prince, his uncle, is declared regent of the kingdom.

The late king made a will, which limited the regent's authority. This wise prince went to the parliament, and there laying open all the prerogatives of his birth, got them to annul the regulations of the late monarch, who seemed desirous of out-living himself, and of reigning even after his death.

The parliaments are like those ruins which we trample under foot, but which yet recal the memory of some temple famous in the antient religion of the nations. They seldom meddle now in any thing more than the dispensation of justice; and their authority will drop every day more and more, unless some unforeseen accident should restore it once more to life and strength. These great bodies have had the common fate of all human things: they have submitted to time, which destroys every thing; to the corruption of manners, which has weakened every thing; to the supreme power, which has over-turned every thing.

But the regent, to make himself acceptable to the people, seemed at first to pay a regard to this image of the public liberty; and as if he intended to raise from earth both the temple and the idol, he seemed to respect it as the support of the monarchy, and the foundation of all lawful authority.

Paris, 4th of the Moon

Regeb 1715.

LETTER XCIII.

*USBEK to his brother SANTON, in the monastery
of Casbin.*

I HUMBLE myself before thee, sacred Santon, and throw myself prostrate on the earth : I respect the print of thy footsteps as the apple of my eye. Thy sanctity is so great that thou seemest to have the heart of our prophet : thy austerities amaze even heaven itself : the angels have beheld thee from the pinnacle of glory, and have cried out : how is it possible he can be yet on earth, when his spirit is here with us flying about the throne which is supported by the clouds !

How then should I refrain from paying thee the highest reverence, I who have learned from our doctors that even the infidel Dervises have a mark of holiness which ought to make them venerable to true believers, and that God has chosen to himself, out of all the corners of the earth, some souls more pure than others, which he has separated from the impious world, to the intent that their fervent prayers and mortifications may arrest his indignation just ready to fall upon so many rebellious nations !

These Christians tell wonders of their first Santons, who retired by thousands into the frightful desarts of Thebaïs, and had for their chiefs Paul, Anthony, and Pacomus. If what they relate of them be true, their lives are as full of prodigies as those of our holy Imaums. They sometimes passed ten whole years at a time without seeing the face of a man : but they dwelt night and day with dæmons ; they were incessantly tormented by those wicked spirits : they found them in their beds ; at their tables ; no place

was secure against them. If all this be true, most reverend Santon, it must be owned that none in the world ever kept worse company.

The graver sort of Christians look upon these stories to be a natural allegory representing the wretchedness of the state of man. In vain do we seek peace even in the desert; temptations still pursue us; our passions, described under the notion of dæmons, will never let us rest: those monsters of the heart; those illusions of the mind; those vain fants of error and falsehood, appear to us every moment to lead us out of the right path, and attack us in our very fasts and hair-cloths; that is, even in our greatest strength.

As for me, most venerable Santon, I know that the messenger of God has chained Satan, and cast him into the abyss; he hath purified the earth, once overrun with his power, and made it an abode fit for angels and prophets.

Paris, the 9th of the Moon

Chahban, 1715.

L E T T E R XCIV.

USBEK to RHEDI, at Venice.

I NEVER heard any man talk of the law of nations, but he began with enquiring carefully what was the origin of society; which I think ridiculous. If indeed men formed no societies; if they avoided and fled from each other; then it would be very natural to enquire the reason, and why they should desire to keep asunder: but as it is, they are even born in mutual ties to each other: a son is born near his fa-

the establish'd assyrian school said

ther, and continues with him : here is society, and the cause of society.

The law of nations is more studied in Europe than in Asia : yet the passions of princes, the patience of nations, the flattery of authors, have corrupted all the principles of it.

This law, as it is now doctored, is a science that instructs princes how far they may violate justice without prejudice to their own interest. A glorious design ! to harden their consciences, by reducing iniquity into a system ; by laying down rules for the practice of it, by settling the principles of it, and then drawing conclusions from them !

The unlimited power of our sublime sultans, which has no rule but itself, does not produce more monsters, than this base art which strives to make justice bend, though inflexible.

One would imagine, Rhedi, there were two different sorts of justice : one to regulate the affairs of private persons, which prevails in the civil law : the other to compose the differences that arise between people and people : which plays the tyrant in the law of nations ; as if the law of nations were not itself a civil law, not indeed of a particular country, but of the world.

I shall be more particular with thee upon this head in another letter.

Paris, 1st of the Moon
Zilhage, 1716.

LETTER XCV.

USBEK to the same.

THE magistrate ought to do justice between citizen and citizen : every nation ought to do the same between themselves and another nation.

This second distribution of justice requires no maxims but what are used in the first.

Between nation and nation there is seldom any want of a third to be umpire; because the grounds of dispute are almost always clear and easy to be determined. The interest of two nations are generally so far separated, that it requires nothing but to be a true lover of justice to find it out.

It is not the same with regard to the differences that arise between private persons. As they live in society, their interests are so mingled and confounded, and there are so many different sorts of them, that it is necessary for a third person to untangle what the covetousness of the parties strives to tie knots in.

There are but two sorts of justifiable wars: that which we enter into for the repelling an enemy that attacks us; and that which we undertake in defence of an ally that is attacked.

There would be no equity in making war upon a prince's private quarrel; unless the case were of that heinous nature as to deserve the death of the prince or people that committed it. Thus, a prince should not make war, for being denied some honour which was his right, or for any disrespect to his ambassadors, or the like trifles: no more than a private man ought to kill one that refuses him the wall. The reason is, that as a declaration of war is an act of justice wherein the punishment should always bear proportion to the fault, we should consider, whether the person we declare war against is worthy of death. For to make war upon any one, is to seek to punish him with death.

The most severe act of justice in the law of nations is war; its end being the destruction of society.

Reprisals are of the second degree. To propor-

tion the penalty to the crime, is a method which no tribunal could ever help observing.

A third act of justice is to deprive a prince of the advantages he reaps from our commerce, still measuring the punishment by the offence.

The fourth act of justice, which ought to be the most frequent, is a renunciation of the alliance of the people against whom we have cause of complaint. This penalty is answerable to that of banishment in common tribunals, which cuts off the criminal from society. So a prince, whose alliance we renounce, is thereby cut off from our society, and is no longer one of our members.

There can be no greater affront done to a prince than to renounce his alliance, and no greater honour than to court it. There is nothing among men more glorious nor more useful, than to have others concerned and watchful for their preservation.

But in order to make an alliance binding, it must be just : so that an alliance made between two nations to oppress a third, is not lawful, and may honourably and innocently be broke.

Neither does it become the dignity and reputation of a prince to enter into an alliance with a tyrant. We read, that a certain Ægyptian monarch sent to reprehend the king of Samos for his cruelty and tyranny, calling upon him to amend ; and upon his not doing it, gave him to know that he renounced his friendship and alliance.

The right of conquest is no right at all. A society can never be founded upon any thing but the free consent of all the members : if it is destroyed by conquest, the people are thereby freed from their old engagements : it does not make a new society ; and if the conqueror goes about to do it, he acts the tyrant.

As to treaties of peace, they are never lawful when they ordain a cession or reparation more considerable than the damage done : this is mere violence, and may at any time be lawfully set aside : unless, in order to recover what we have lost, we are obliged to have recourse to such violent methods as will create mischiefs greater than the advantage sought after.

This, my dear Rhedi, is what I call the law of nations, which may be called more properly the law of reason.

Paris, 4th of the Moon,

Zilcade, 1717.

LETTER XCVI.

The CHIEF EUNUCH to USBEK, at Paris.

HERE are arrived here a great many yellow women out of the kingdom of Visapour : I have bought one for thy brother the governor of Mazenderan, who about a month ago sent me his sublime commands, and a hundred tomans.

I have the more skill in women, because they do not surprize me, and my eyes are not disturbed by the motions of my heart.

I never saw so regular and complete a beauty : her sparkling eyes enliven her whole face, and heighten the beauty of a complexion that eclipses all the charms of Circassia.

The chief eunuch of a merchant of Ispahan would have purchased her from me : but she disdainfully shunned his sight, and seemed to court mine ; as tho' she would have me understand that a vile merchant was not worthy of her, and that she was destined for a more illustrious husband.

I confess to thee I am ravished with a secret delight, when I think of the charms of this lovely creature : I fancy I see her entering into thy brother's seraglio : I please myself with imagining the surprize of all his women : the imperious vexation of some ; the silent but more mournful affliction of others ; the malicious pleasure of those who have no further hopes ; and the enraged ambition of those who have hopes still.

I am travelling from one end of the kingdom to the other, to change the face of the whole seraglio : what passions shall I provoke ! what fears, what troubles am I preparing !

But yet all this inward uneasiness shall not break the outward tranquillity : great revolutions shall be hid in the bottom of the heart ; their vexation shall be kept in, and their joys restrained : their obedience shall be no less exact, nor the rules less severe : outward mildness and content shall shew itself even in inward rage and despair.

We observe that the more women we have in charge, the less trouble they give us. A greater necessity of pleasing ; less convenience for caballing ; more examples of submission : all this strengthens their chains : one is a constant watch upon the proceedings of another : they seem to labour in conjunction with us to make themselves more dependent : they do almost half our duty for us, and open our eyes when we are in danger of being deluded. In short, they are eternally stirring up their master against their rivals, not seeing that it is their own turn to be punished next.

But all this, magnificent lord, all this is nothing without the master's presence. What can we do with that vain fantom of authority which we have, for it is impossible to communicate the whole ? We

but faintly represent one half of thyself : we can shew them nothing but an odious severity. Thou minglest fear with hope; more absolute when thou carefest, than when thou threatenest.

Return, then, mighty lord, return to these mansions, and shew the marks of thy sovereignty. Come and give ease to passions almost grown desperate: come and remove all excuse for going astray: come and quiet love, who begins to murmur; and make duty itself agreeable: come, lastly, and relieve thy faithful eunuchs from a burden which grows every day heavier and heavier.

From the Seraglio of Ispahan, 8th of the Moon Zilhage, 1716.

L E T T E R XCVII.

USBEK to HASSIN, dervise of the mountain of Jaron.

O THOU most knowing Dervise, whose curious mind is resplendent with so many parts of science, hearken to what I am going to say to thee.

There are philosophers here who indeed have not attained to the summit of the oriental wisdom: they have never been caught up to the throne of light: they have neither heard the ineffable words resounding from consorts of angels; nor left the awful raptures of a divine fury: but, left to themselves, deprived of holy aids, they follow in silence the footsteps of human reason.

Thou canst not imagine how far this guide has led them. They have disintangled the jarring elements of Chaos, and by a plain mechanism unfolded the

order of the divine architecture. The author of nature gave motion to matter: there required no more to produce this miraculous variety of effects which we behold in the universe.

Let common legislators propose laws for the regulation of human societies; laws are subject to change as the minds of those who contrive them, and of the nations that obey them: these men talk of none but laws, general, immutable, eternal; which are observed without any the least exception, with infinite order, regularity, and readiness, in the immense expanse.

And what dost thou think, O man divine, that these laws are? Thou perhaps imaginest that entering into the councils of the Eternal, thou shalt be struck with amazement at the sublimity of deep mysteries, thou despairest before-hand of comprehending: thou expectest only to admire.

But thou wilt soon be undeceived: they do not dazzle us with an empty parade: their simplicity has made them long misunderstood: and it was not till after studious reflections that their fruitfulness and extensiveness came to be found out.

The first law is, that all bodies tend in right lines, unless they meet with some obstacle that turns them out of their way: and the second, which is but the result of the former, is, that all bodies which turn round a centre, seek to fly from it, because the further it is from that centre, the more the line, which it moves in, approaches to a right line.

Here sublime Dervise, is the key of nature. Here are fruitful principles from which they draw consequences beyond all imagination, as I will shew thee in a particular letter.

The knowlege of five or six truths has filled their

philosophy with wonders, and has enabled them to perform more stupendous miracles than are related of our holy prophets.

For, in short, I am satisfied there is none of our doctors but would have been strangely puzzled, if he had been required to weigh in a balance all the air which surrounds the earth ; or to measure all the water which falls in a year upon its surface ; or that would have known what to answer, if he had been asked how many leagues sound travels in an hour, or what time a ray of light takes in its passage from the sun to us ? How many fathom it is from hence to Saturn ? What curve a ship must be cut into, to be the best sailer that can possibly be made ?

Perhaps if some divine man had embellished the works of these philosophers with lofty and sublime expressions ; if he had filled them with bold figures, and mysterious allegories ; he would have composed a work inferior to nothing but the holy Alcoran.

Yet if I may venture to tell thee my real thoughts, I am not fond of the figurative stile. There is in our Alcoran a vast number of puerile things, which still appear to me to be what they are, notwithstanding they are heightened by the force and energy of the language : at first it seems as if the inspired books are nothing but the divine ideas expressed in human language : on the contrary, in our sacred writings, we find the language of God, and the ideas of men ; as if, out of an admirable caprice, God had dictated the words, and man found the thoughts.

Thou wilt say, perhaps, I speak too freely of what is so holy among us : thou wilt take it to be the effect of the licentiousness tolerated in this country. No, thanks be to heaven, my mind has not

corrupted my heart ; and, as long as I live, Hali shall be my prophet.

Paris, the 15th of the Moon
Chahban, 1716.

LETTER XCVIII.

USBEK to IBBEN, at Smyrna.

THREE is not in the world a country where fortune is so inconstant as in this. There happen every ten years revolutions, which plunge the rich man into beggary, and exalt the poor man with rapid wings to the height of riches. The one is amazed at his poverty ; the other, at his wealth. The new rich man admires the wisdom of providence ; the poor man, the blindness of destiny.

Those that collect the tributes swim in the midst of treasures : there are very few Tantalusses among them : yet they come into this employment from the lowest wretchedness : they are despised like the dirt when they are poor ; when they are rich they are esteemed well enough ; and they stick at nothing to obtain this esteem.

They are, at present, in terrible circumstances. There is a court just established, called, THE CHAMBER OF JUSTICE, because it is to strip them of their ill-gotten estates : they can neither transfer nor conceal their wealth ; for they are obliged to make an exact confession of it upon pain of death : so that they are forced to pass a very narrow straight, I mean, between their lives and their money. To heighten their good fortune, there is a minister, well known for his wit, that honours them with his rillery, and is pleasant upon all the deliberations of the

council. We very seldom hear of a minister of state inclined to make the people at all merry ; and we ought to own our obligations to this, for undertaking it.

The body of footmen is of more honour in France than any where else ; it is a seminary of great men ; it fills up the vacancies that happen in all the other vocations. The members of it presently take the places of all ministers that prove unfortunate, all magistrates that are ruined, or gentlemen that drop in war : and when they are not sufficient to fill them in their own persons, they lift up great families by means of their daughters, who are like a sort of dung which fattens lands that are mountainous, stony, and dry.

My dear Ibben, I am never weary of admiring providence in her method of distributing riches : if she had granted them only to good men, they would not have been sufficiently distinguished from virtue itself, and we should never have known the vileness of them. But when we examine what sort of people are most loaded with them ; by despising the rich, we at length come to have a contempt for riches.

Paris, 26th of the Moon

Maharram, 1717.

LETTER XCIX.

RICA to RHEDI, at Venice.

THE strange changes of fashion among the French are surprizing. They have forgot how they dressed last summer ; they know less how they shall dress next winter : but, above all, it is impossible to

to conceive how much it costs a husband to keep his wife in the fashion.

What would it signify to give thee an exact description of their habit and ornaments ? A new fashion would spoil my account, as it does their cloths ; and before thou hadst received my letter, all would be altered.

A woman that leaves Paris, to spend six months in the country, comes home as antiquated as if she had been there thirty years. The son does not know the picture of his own mother, so strange the dress she was drawn in is now grown : he takes it to be the picture of some American, or only a grotesque crotchet of the painter's.

Sometimes the head-dress rises by degrees to a vast height, and then a sudden revolution takes it down again as fast : there was a time when its immense loftiness left the face of a woman in the middle of her body. At another time, the feet were got thither : the heels were a sort of pedestals that raised the women into the air. Who will believe it ? the architects are often forced to raise, lower, and widen the doors as the women's dress either shrinks or enlarges itself ; and the rules of their art are become subject to their fancies : sometimes you shall see a prodigious quantity of patches upon their faces ; and next day they all disappear again. Formerly the women had shapes and teeth : now they do not mind them. In this changeable nation, let the critic say what he will, the daughter is formed differently from the mother.

It is the same with their behaviour and way of living, as with their fashions : the French change their customs with the age of their king. I know not but their monarch might even make this very people grave, if he went about it. The prince commun-

cates his way of thinking to the court, the court to the city, the city to the country. The king's soul is a mould which gives shape to all the rest.

Paris, 8th of the Moon

Saphar, 1717.

LETTER G.

RICA to the same.

I WROTE to thee the other day about the prodigious inconstancy of the French in their fashions : yet it is inconceivable to what a degree they are fond of them ; they are the rules by which they judge of every thing done by other nations : they call every thing to this standard : every thing foreign appears to them ridiculous. I confess to thee, I cannot make this madness for their customs agree at all with the inconstancy with which they change them almost daily.

When I tell thee that they despise every thing sovereign, I speak only of trifles : for, in things of consequence, they appear diffident of themselves, even to their own lessening. They seem very ready to own that other nations are wiser, provided themselves are but allowed to be the best dressed. They are willing to subject themselves to the laws of a rival people, if the French peruke-makers may but be the legislators as to the shape of foreign perukes. Nothing appears to them so glorious, as to see the taste of their cooks prevail from north to south, and the decrees of their tirewomen observed in all the toilettes in Europe.

With these noble advantages, what signifies it if their good-sense be imported to them from abroad,

and if they do borrow from their neighbours every thing that concerns both their political and civil government ?

Who would think that the most antient and potent kingdom in Europe should have been governed, for above ten ages, by laws not calculated for them ? Had the French been conquered, it had been natural enough : but they are the conquerors.

They have deserted the old laws made by their first king in the general assemblies of the nation : and, what is most singular, the Roman laws, which they have adopted in their room, were partly made, and partly collected by emperors who were contemporary with their own legislators.

And to make their theft complete, and that they might get all their good sense at other peoples cost ; they have naturalized all the constitutions of popes, and thereof made a new part of their law. A new kind of slavery !

It is true, of latter days they have reduced into writing some statutes of cities and provinces ; but they are almost every one borrowed from the Roman law.

This multitude of adopted, and, if we may say, naturalized laws, is so great, that it almost equally oppresses both justice and the judge. But these volumes of laws are nothing in comparison of that dreadful army of glossers, commentators, compilers, people as weak in thought, as strong in numbers.

This is not all. These foreign laws have introduced formalities, which are a scandal to human reason. It would be a difficult question to resolve, whether formality did most mischief by creeping into law or into physic : whether she has committed most devastation under the lawyers's gown, or under the physician's broad-brimmed hat ; and whether she

has ruined more people in the one, than she hath killed in the other.

Paris, the 12th of the Moon

Saphar, 1717.

LETTER. CI.

USBEK to ***.

THEY talk of nothing here but the CONSTITUTION. I went the other day into a house, where the first person I cast my eyes upon, was a great fat man with a ruddy countenance, that was saying with a loud voice : I have published my mandate : I shall not trouble myself to answer all your objections : but read that same mandate of mine ; there you will find I have resolved all your scruples. I am sure I was forced to sweat hard to make it, says he, wiping his forehead : I had occasion for all my learning, and was forced to read many a Latin author. I believe so, said one that stood by, for it is a curious piece ; and I defy the Jesuit that comes to see you so often, to write a better. Well, read it then, replied he, and you will be let more into these matters in a quarter of an hour, than if I were to talk to you two hours together. Thus he tried to avoid entering into conversation, and exposing his sufficiency. But finding himself close pressed, he was forced to come out of his intrenchments ; and he began to lay down theologically a good handsom number of impertinences, which were all backed by a Dervise who stood up stiffly for every one of them. When two men that were there denied him any principle, he presently cried out, nay, but it is certain ; we have so adjudged it, and we are infallible judges.

And how came you to be infallible judges? said I.
Do not you perceive, said he, that the Holy Ghost
enlightens us? It is very lucky that it is so, answered I; for if you always talk as you have done all this day, I am sure you have need enough of light.

Paris, 18th of the Moon

Rebiab 1st, 1717.

LETTER CII.

USBEK to IBBEN, at Smyrna.

THE most potent states in Europe, are the emperor, the kings of France, Spain, and England. Italy and a good part of Germany are divided into a greater number of petty states, whose princes are, properly speaking, the martyrs of sovereignty. Our glorious sultans have more wives, than most of those pretty princes have subjects. Those of Italy, who are not so united as those of Germany, are more to be pitied: their dominions are open like so many caravanserails, where they are obliged to lodge their first comers: they are therefore under a necessity of adhering to some great prince, and giving him a share rather of their fears than their friendship.

Most of the governments in Europe are monarchic; or rather, called so: for I know not whether there were ever any such in reality: at least it is impossible they should subsist long: it is a state of violence, and always falls into a despotic government, or into a republic: the power can never be equally divided between the prince and the people: the equilibrium is too difficult to preserve: the power must diminish on one side, while it increases on the other: but the ad-

vantage generally happens on the side of the prince, who is at the head of the armies.

And accordingly the power of the European kings is very great, and one may venture to say, as great as they please to make it : but they do not stretch it so far as our sultans : first, because they would not shock the manners and religion of their subjects. Secondly, because it is not their interest to carry it so far.

Nothing brings down a prince so near to the condition of his subjects, as exercising an extravagant power over them : nothing exposes them so much to the turns and caprices of fortune.

The custom they use, of causing all that offend them to be put to death upon the least signal, overthrows the proportion which ought to be kept between the faults and the punishments, which is in a manner the soul of a state, and the harmony of an empire ; and this proportion being scrupulously observed by the Christian princes, gives them an infinite advantage above our sultans.

A Persian who, either by imprudence or misfortune, has drawn upon himself the displeasure of his prince, is sure of death : the least fault or the least caprice brings him into this case. But if he had attempted the life of his sovereign ; if he had gone about to betray his strong towns to the enemy ; he could still but lose his life : therefore he runs no greater risque in this last case than the first.

So that upon the least displeasure finding death unavoidable, and having nothing worse to fear, he is naturally inclined to disturb the peace of the state, and to conspire against his sovereign ; this being the only refuge he has left.

It is not so with the great men in Europe, who lose nothing by being disgraced, but the good-will

and favour of their prince : they retire from court, and think of nothing but enjoying a quiet life, and the advantages of their birth. As they seldom forfeit their lives but for high treason, they are fearful of being drawn into it, considering how much they have to lose, and how little to gain : which is the reason that here we seldom see rebellions, or kings destroyed by violent deaths.

If in the unlimited authority our princes possess, they did not use so many precautions to guard their lives, they would none of them live a day ; and if they did not keep in pay an infinite number of troops to tyrannize over the rest of their subjects, their empire would not subsist a month.

It is not above four or five ages ago, that a king of France took guards, contrary to the custom of those days, to secure himself from some ruffians that a petty prince in Asia had sent to murder him : till then kings had lived quiet in the midst of their subjects, like fathers in the midst of their children.

Though the kings of France cannot of their own motion take away the life of any of their subjects, like our sultans ; yet they have power of mercy towards all criminals. It is sufficient that a man has been happy enough to see the august countenance of his sovereign, to blot out all his crimes. These monarchs are like the sun, who cheers every thing with warmth and life.

Paris, 8th of the Moon

Rebiab ad. 1717.

LETTER CIII.

USBEK to the same.

TO pursue the thought of my last letter, hear what a good sensible European said to me the other day.

The worst method the princes of Asia could take, is to hide themselves as they do. They think to win the more respect by so doing: but they win respect for the kingship, and not for the king; and fasten the minds of their subjects to a certain throne, and not to a certain person.

That invisible power which holds the government is always the same with regard to the people. Though ten kings, whom they know only by name, have their throats cut one after another, they feel no difference: it is just as if they were governed successively by spirits.

If the detestable parricide of our great king Henry the fourth had struck his knife into the heart of an Indian king; becoming then immediately master of the royal signet, and of an immense treasure, which would seem to have been heaped up on purpose for him, he would have taken peaceable possession of the reins of the empire, and no man would ever have thought of inquiring for his king, or his family and children.

We wonder there should never happen any changes in the eastern governments; and why is it, but because they are tyrannical and terrible?

Changes can never be brought about, but either by the prince, or by the people: but there the prince will be sure never to desire any such thing, because in the high degree of power he enjoys, he

has every thing he can wish for ; so that any change must be to his prejudice.

As to the subjects, if any of them forms a design, he cannot execute it upon the state : to do that he must have some force immediately to counterbalance a formidable power, and which is always the only one : he wants time to do this, as well as means : but he can strike at the source of all this power; and for that he needs nothing but an arm and a moment.

The murderer mounts the throne, while the monarch falls down from it, and expires at his feet.

A male-content in Europe contrives to hold some private intelligence ; to go over to the enemy ; to get some strong place into his hands ; to raise some vain murmurs among his fellow-subjects. A male-content in Asia aims directly at the prince, surprises, strikes, destroys ; he blots out his very memory ; in an instant, both slave and lord ; in a moment, usurper and lawful.

Wretched the king who has but one head ; he seems to collect all his power upon that, only to shew the first ambitious villain, the place where to strike at it and seize it.

Paris, 17th of the Moon

Rebiab ad, 1717.

LETTER CIV.

To the same.

ALL the nations in Europe are not under equal subjection to their princes : for instance, the impatient humour of the English seldom gives the king leisure to extend or strengthen his authority :

submission and obedience are virtues they very little value themselves upon. They hold very extraordinary opinions about this article. According to them, there is but one tie that has any effect upon men, which is that of gratitude: a husband, a wife, a father, a son, are bound to each other by nothing, but either the love they bear to each other, or mutual services and benefits: and these various motives of acknowledgement are the origin of all kingdoms and all societies.

But if a prince, instead of endeavouring to make his subjects happy, studies only how to oppress and destroy them; the foundation of obedience ceases; nothing ties, nothing obliges them to him; and they return to their natural liberty. They maintain that no unlimited power can be lawful, because it could never have a lawful beginning. For we cannot, say they, give to another more power over us than we have over ourselves: now we have not an unlimited power over ourselves: for instance, we cannot touch our own lives; no man upon earth therefore, conclude they, can have such a power.

High-treason, according to them, is nothing but a crime committed by the weaker against the stronger, by disobeying him, let him disobey him in what way he will. And accordingly the people of England, happening to prove the stronger in contention with one of their kings, declared it to be high-treason in a prince to make war upon his subjects. They have very good reason therefore to say, that the precept in the Alcoran, which enjoins obedience to the powers, is not very hard to follow, since they cannot help following it if they would; in as much as it is not to the most virtuous that they are bound to submit, but to the strongest.

The English tell you, that one of their kings having overcome and taken a prince that rebelled against him, and disputed the crown with him, and upbraiding him with his treachery and perfidiousness ; it has been decided but a moment, answered the unfortunate prince, which of us two is the traitor.

An usurper declares all to be rebels, that have not oppressed their country like himself : and thinking there are no laws where he sees no judges, forces respect to the blind caprice of chance and fortune, as to the decrees of heaven itself.

Paris, 20th of the Moon
Rebiab 2d, 1717.

LETTER CV.

RHEDR to USBEK, at Paris.

THOU talkest much to me in one of thy letters, of the arts and sciences cultivated in the west : thou wilt take me for a barbarian, in what I am going to say : but I am doubtful whether the advantage drawn from the arts and sciences, be a sufficient recompence to mankind for the ill use they are daily put to.

I have heard that the single invention of bombs hath cost all the nations in Europe their liberty. The princes finding it no longer safe to trust the guard of towns to the citizens, who at the first bomb would have surrendered, thence made an excuse for keeping on foot large bodies of regular troops, with which they afterwards enslaved their subjects.

Thou knowest that since the invention of gunpowder, there is no place impregnable : that is to

say, Usbek, there is no longer any asylum upon earth against injustice and violence.

I always tremble for fear at last some invention will be found out of a shorter way to destroy mankind, and to depopulate whole nations and whole kingdoms.

Thou hast read the historians ; reflect seriously upon them ; thou wilt find that almost all monarchies were founded upon nothing but the ignorance of the arts, and were destroyed only by their being too much cultivated. The ancient empire of Persia is a domestic instance to us of this truth.

I have not been long in Europe : but I have often heard wise men talk of the ravages of chymistry ; it seems to be a fourth scourge which ruins mankind, and destroys them in particular, but continually ; while war, plague and famine cut them off in general, but by fits.

What have we gained by the compass, and the discovery of so many new nations, but a communication of their distempers rather than of their riches ? Gold and silver were before established by a general agreement to be the price of all merchandizes, and the measure of their value, because those metals were scarce and unfit for all other uses : what benefit was it to us then, that they should grow more common, and that, to shew the value of the commodity, we should have two or three signs instead of one ? This was only an inconvenience.

But, on the other hand, this invention has been terribly pernicious to the countries newly discovered. Whole nations have been massacred : and those who have escaped death, are reduced to so cruel a slavery, that the very relation makes the Mussulmans tremble.

Happy ignorance of the sons of Mahomet ! charming simplicity, beloved by our holy prophet ! thou

always recallest to my mind the plain honesty of ancient times, and the peace which dwelt in the hearts of our first fathers !

Venice, 2d of the Moon
Rhamazan, 1717.

LETTER CVI.

USBEK to RHEDI, at Venice.

EITHER thou dost not think what thou sayest; or else thou artest better than thou thinkest. Thou hast left thy country for the sake of knowlege, and thou despisest all instruction : thou travellest for thy accomplishment into a country where the polite arts are cultivated, and thou lookest upon them to be pernicious. What shall I say to thee, Rhedi ? I agree with thee more than thou dost with thyself.

Hast thou thoroughly reflected upon the barbarous and wretched state to which the loss of the arts would sink us ? There is no need of imagining it ; we may see it. There are yet nations upon earth, among whom an ape tolerably well taught, might live with honour : he would be much upon a level with the rest of the inhabitants : they would not even think him an odd fellow, nor at all whimsical : he would pass muster as well as any of them, and for ought I know be distinguished above the rest by his politeness.

Thou sayest that the founders of empires have almost generally been ignorant of the arts. I do not deny but that a barbarous nation may, like an impetuous torrent, overspread the face of the earth, and with their savage armies rush in upon and bear down the best governed kingdoms : but, take heed ; they

either learned the arts from the people they conquered, or obliged that people to practise them for them : without this their power would have gone away like the grumbling of thunder or tempests.

Thou art afraid, thou sayest, some other way of destruction will be found out more terrible than that already in use. No ; if any such fatal invention should be hit upon, it would quickly be forbidden by the law of nations ; and the unanimous consent of mankind would soon crush a discovery : it is not the interest of princes to make conquests by such methods : they want subjects, and not lands.

Thou complainest of the invention of gun-powder, and bombs : thou art grieved that now there is no place impregnable ; that is, indeed thou art grieved that wars should be sooner determined now than they were formerly.

Thou must have observed, from thy reading in history, that since the invention of gun-powder, battles are much less bloody than they used to be, because now there is hardly ever any such thing as close fights.

And though in some one particular case an art should be prejudicial ; is that a sufficient reason for rejecting it ! Dost thou believe, Rhedi, that the religion which our holy prophet brought down from heaven, is pernicious, because it shall one day serve to confound the perfidious Christians ?

Thou fanciest that the arts make people effeminate, and thereby occasion the fall of empires. Thou mentioned the ruin of that of the antient Persians, which was the effect of their luxury : but this instance is far from being conclusive ; since the Greeks, who subdued them, cultivated the arts with infinitely more diligence than they did.

When we say the arts render men effeminate, we

certainly do not speak of those who apply themselves that way ; since they are never in idleness, which of all vices softens the courage the most.

We therefore must mean only those who enjoy the fruits of those arts : but as in a well-governed state, those who enjoy the conveniences of one art are obliged to cultivate another, upon pain of falling into a scandalous poverty ; it follows that idleness and luxury are incompatible with the arts.

Of all the cities in the world, I know not but Paris is the most sensual, and resines the most upon her pleasures ; and yet perhaps no people live harder. To entertain one man in luxury, a hundred others must labour incessantly. A woman takes it in her head to appear at an assembly in such a dress : from that moment fifty artificers must bid adieu to sleep, and hardly give themselves time to eat or drink. She commands, and is obeyed more expeditiously than our great monarch, because interest is the most powerful monarch upon earth.

This earnest application to labour, this thirst of getting wealth, reaches from the meanest artificers to the greatest men in the kingdom : no-body cares to be poorer than him that was once below him. You shall see at Paris a man who has enough to live upon till the day of judgment, working night and day, and venturing his life to get, as he will tell you, a subsistence.

The same spirit governs the whole nation : you see nothing but labour and ingenuity : where then is the effeminate people thou so much talkest of ?

I will suppose, Rhedi, that in some kingdom no other arts were allowed but such as are absolutely necessary in the manuring of the lands, which yet are very numerous ; and that all those were banish-

ed, which served only to pleasure or curiosity : I will maintain it, that kingdom would be the most miserable in the whole world.

Though the inhabitants should be masters of so much philosophy, as to deny themselves so many things which are for their conveniency ; the people would daily fall to decay, and the state would become so weak, that any little potentate would be able to conquer it.

I might here enter into a long discussion, to prove to thee that the revenues of the subjects would be almost absolutely at an end, and consequently those of the prince : there would be hardly any of those mutual relations, which are between citizens of the same faculty : that circulation of wealth, and that increase of income, which arises from the dependence of the arts one upon another, would absolutely cease : every man would depend only upon the revenue of his land, and raise but just so much upon it as was necessary to keep him from starving : but as that is not the hundred part of the revenue of the kingdom, it must follow, that the number of inhabitants would decrease in proportion, and that there would be but a hundred part of them left.

Consider what a great article the revenues of ingenuity will appear. An estate in land brings in to its master but the twentieth part of its value annually : but a painter with a guinea's worth of colours shall draw a picture that will fetch fifty. The same may be said of gold-smiths, workers in wool and silk, and all manner of artificers.

From all which, Rhedi, we are to conclude, that, in order to make a prince powerful, it is necessary his subjects should live in affluence : he should study to procure them all manner of superfluities, with as much

attention, as to furnish them with necessaries for life.

Paris, 14th of the Moon,
Chalval, 1717.

LETTER CVII.

RICA to IBBEN, at Smyrna.

I HAVE seen the young monarch : his life is very precious to his subjects : it is no less so to all Europe upon account of the great confusions his death might produce. But kings are like Gods ; and while they are alive, we are to suppose them immortal. His countenance is full of majesty, but beautiful : a fine education concurs with a happy disposition to promise already a great prince.

They say we can never judge of the character of these western kings, till they have passed through the two great trials, their mistress and their confessor : we shall soon see both endeavouring to win upon the mind of this ; and great contentions will arise about it. For under a young prince, those two powers are always rivals : but they agree and unite under an old one. With a young king, the † Dervise has a very difficult part to act : the king's strength is his weakness : but the other triumphs equally both in his weakness and strength too.

When I first came into France, I found the late king absolutely governed by women, and yet considering his age I believe never a monarch in the universe had less occasion for them. I one day overheard a woman saying : we must do something for that young colonel : his valour I am thoroughly acquainted with : I will speak about it to the minister. Another said : it is strange that that young Abbe

† The confessor.

should be forget : he must be a bishop : he is a man of birth, and I can answer for his character. Yet thou must not imagine, that the women who talked at this rate were the prince's favourites : they never spoke to him perhaps twice in their lives, which yet is a very easy thing to do with these European princesses. But the reason is, there is hardly one who has any employment at court, in Paris, or in the provinces, that has not some woman, through whose hands all the favour, and sometimes all the injustice he can do, always pass. These women are all fastened together by mutual ties, and form a kind of republic, of which every member, always active, succours and assists the other upon any occasion that offers : it is in a manner a state within a state : and one that is at court, at Paris, or in the provinces, and sees the ministers, magistrates, and prelates, acting in their several spheres, without knowing the women that govern them, is like a man that sees a machine playing, but is all the while ignorant of the springs that move it.

Dost thou fancy, Ibben, that a woman consents to be mistress to a minister of state, for the pleasure of lying with him ? thou art quite out : it is to have an opportunity of presenting him every morning with five or six petitions : and the goodness of their disposition appears in their zeal for doing good to a number of unhappy people, who procure them a hundred thousand livres a year.

We complain in Persia, that the kingdom is governed by two or three women : it is much worse in France, where women in general bear rule, and take the whole authority to themselves, not only by wholesale but even retail.

Paris, the last of the Moon

Chalval, 1717.

LETTER CVIII.

USBEK to ***

THREE are a sort of books which we never heard of in Persia, and which seem mightily in fashion here : I mean the JOURNALISTS. People's laziness is extremely indulged by them ; they are overjoyed with being able to dispatch thirty volumes in a quarter of an hour.

In most books, the author has hardly finished his necessary compliments of introduction, but the reader is at his last gasp : he leads him half dead into a subject drowned into an ocean of words. This man has a mind to immortalize his name in DUODECIMO ; the other in QUARTO : one that has a more noble ambition aspires to a FOLIO : he is consequently obliged to stretch his subject in proportion ; which he does without mercy ; reckoning for nothing the fatigue of the poor reader, who is forced to sweat hard to contract what the poor author has taken so much pains to amplify.

I cannot find, ***, what merit there can be in composing such works : I could write enow of them, if I had a mind to ruin my health and a bookseller.

The great fault of the journalists is their never speaking of any but new books : as if truth was ever new. Till a man has read all the old books, I see no reason he has to prefer the new.

But when they lay it down to themselves as a law, never to speak of works but what are just hot out of the forge ; they also lay down another, which is, to be very stupid. They always take care to avoid criticising the books they give extracts of, whatever room there is for so doing : and indeed where is the

man so courageous as to venture to create himself ten or a dozen enemies every month ?

Most authors are like the poets, who would bear a good sound caning without grumbling ; but who, as little tender as they are of their shoulders, are so much so of their works, that they cannot bear the least criticism : a man must therefore be very cautious how he attacks them in so sensible a part : and the journalists know as much : and therefore they do just the contrary : they first praise the subject treated upon ; which is one piece of stupidity : next they proceed to the praise of the author, which comes from them by mere force ; for they have people to deal with, whose pens are ready drawn to revenge themselves upon a poor journalist, that they think does not do them justice.

Paris, 5th of the Moon

Zilcade, 1718.

L E T T E R CIX.

RICA, to * * *.

THE university of Paris is the eldest daughter of the kings of France, and the eldest by much : for she is above nine hundred years old : and indeed she does sometimes doat.

I have been told that some time ago she had a great controversy with some doctors upon account of the letter \dagger Q, which she was for having pronounced like a K. The dispute grew so hot, that some were stripped of their estates about it : the parliament was forced to determine the contest : and they granted

\dagger He means Ramus's quarrel.

permission by a solemn decree to all the subjects of the king of France to pronounce that letter just as they thought fit. It was certainly very diverting to see the two most venerable bodies in all Europe employed about deciding the fate of a letter in the alphabet.

One would think, my dear * * *, that the greatest men become noodles when they are assembled together, and that where there are most wise people there is least wisdom. Great bodies always lay so much stress upon minutencies, formalities, and vain usages, that the essential is postponed for them. I have heard that a king of Arragon † having assembled the states of Arragon and Catalonia ; the first sessions was spent in deciding what language the deliberations should be held in : the dispute was warm, and the states were just ready to break up about it, if one had not hit upon an expedient, which was, that the question should be put in Catalan, and the answer made in the Arragoneze language.

Paris, the 25th of the Moon
Zilhage, 1715.

LETTER CX.

RICA, to * * *.

THE part a pretty woman has to act is of a much more serious nature than is commonly imagined : nothing is of higher consequence than what she does at her toilet every morning in the midst of her servants ; it does not cost a general of an army more thought how to place his right, or his corps de reserve, than it does her where to set a patch, which indeed

† In the year 1610.

may fail of success, but which she hopes or foresees will not.

What a constant rack of invention ! What perplexity to reconcile the interest of two rivals every moment, and seem neuter to both, while she is wholly at the service of either of them, and is the mediatrix in all the causes of complaints which she gives them !

How much hurry in contriving parties of pleasure immediately one upon the neck of another, in making them succeed each other without interruption, and providing against all accidents that might break them !

With all this, their greatest difficulty is not to be diverted, but to seem to be diverted : be as dull and heavy in their company as you please, they will forgive you, provided they can but appear to have been very merry.

I was some days ago at a supper which some women gave in the country. All the way thither they were perpetually saying : " However, let us laugh heartily, and be very merry."

We happened to be very ill paired, and were consequently dull enough. " Well, says one of my women, we are pure and merry; there is not a company in Paris so gay as we are." As I began to be quite tired, a woman jogged me, and said : " Well, are not we rare good company ?" Aye, answered I yawning ; " I am afraid I shall split my sides with laughing." However, gravity got the better of our resolutions ; and as to me, from one gape to another I was led into a lethargic sleep that put an end to my share of the mirth.

Paris, the 11th of the Moon

Maharram, 1715.

LETTER CXI.

RHEDI to USBEK, at Paris.

DURING my stay in Europe I employ myself in reading the historians both antient and modern: I compare one age with another: I take delight in seeing them, as it were, pass away before me; and I particularly dwell upon those great changes which have made one age so different from the next, and the earth so unlike itself.

Thou hast not perhaps taken notice of a thing which gives me continual surprize. How comes the world to be so thin of people in comparison of what it was formerly? How could nature lose the prodigious fruitfulness of the first ages? Is she grown old, and in danger of falling to nothing for want of strength?

I was above a year in Italy, where I saw nothing but the broken wrecks of the antient Italy, once so famous. Though every body there lives in the cities, yet they are perfect desarts for want of inhabitants: they seem to subsist now only to shew us the places in which stood those potent cities so much talked of in history.

Some affirm, that the single city of Rome antiently contained more people than the greatest kingdom in Europe does at this day: there were some Roman citizens that had ten, nay, twenty thousand slaves, besides those that worked at their country houses: and as there was computed to be four or five hundred thousand citizens, we cannot make any conjecture at the whole number of its inhabitants but what must shock the imagination.

There were once in Sicily potent kingdoms, and numerous nations, which are now disappeared: that

island is now considerable for nothing but her vulcanoes.

Greece is so depopulated, that it does not now contain the hundredth part of its antient inhabitants.

Spain, formerly so crowded, now exhibits to view nothing but waste unpeopled fields: and France is nothing in comparison of that antient Gaul described by Cæsar.

The northern countries are strangely stript: they are very far from being under a necessity now, as formerly, to divide themselves, and send out in swarms colonies and whole nations to seek for new abodes.

Poland and Turkey in Europe have hardly any inhabitants.

We cannot find in America the two hundredth part of the men that once composed such mighty empires there.

Asia is in little better condition. That Asia Minor, which contained so many potent monarchies, and such prodigious number of great cities, has now but two or three. As to the greater Asia; that which is under the obedience of the Turk is no better peopled: and as to that which is under the dominion of our kings, if we compare it with the flourishing state it was in formerly, we shall find it has but a very small share left of the infinite number of inhabitants which it had in the time of the Xerxes's and Darius's.

As to the petty states that are upon the borders of these great empires, they are mere desarts: such are the kingdoms of Irimetta, Circassia, and Curiel. All these princes, with vast dominions, can hardly muster up fifty thousand subjects.

Ægypt has failed no less than other countries.

In short, I take a survey of the whole earth, and I find nothing but ruin and decay : she seems to have been just ravaged by plague and famine.

Africa has always been so little known, that we cannot speak of it with so much exactness as of the other parts of the world : but if we may form a judgment from the Mediterranean coasts, which were always well stocked, we find her strangely fallen from what she was when a Roman province. Her princes are now so weak that they are the most petty poten-tates upon the face of the earth.

Upon a calculation, as exact as can be made in matters of this nature, I find there is hardly in the world the fiftieth part of the people that there was in Cæsar's time. And which is more strange, it grows thinner and thinner every day ; and if it goes on at this rate, in ten ages it will be no better than a de-fart.

This, my dear Usbek, is the most terrible cata-strophe that ever happened in the universe : but we have hardly perceived it, because its progress was by slow degrees, and in the course of a great many centuries : which denotes some interior ill quality ; some secret unsuspected poison ; some inward decay, which preys upon human nature.

Venice, 10th of the Moon
Regeb, 1718.

LETTER CXII.

USBEK to RHEDI, at Venice.

THE world, my dear Rhedi, is not incorruptible : the heavens themselves are not ; the astronomers are eye-witnesses of all the changes there, which

are the natural effects of the universal motion of matter.

The earth is subject to the same laws of motion as the other planets : she suffers a perpetual conflict within, among her own principles : sea and land seem to wage eternal war ; every instant produces new conjunctions.

Mankind, in an abode so liable to change, is in a state of no less uncertainty : a hundred thousand causes may act, of which the very last is sufficient to destroy them totally ; and much more to encrease or diminish their number.

I shall not instance those particular catastrophes so frequent among the historians, which have destroyed whole cities and whole kingdoms : there are general ones, which have often brought the race of men to the edge of desolation.

History is full of those universal plagues which have, by turns, laid waste the universe. She tells us of one among the rest which was so violent, that it burnt up the very roots of the plants, and over-ran the whole known world, quite to the empire of Cathay : one degree more of corruption would, perhaps, in one single day, have cut off all human nature.

It is not quite two ages ago that the most shameful of distempers was felt in Europe, Asia, and Africa : in a very short space of time it wrought effects surpassing belief : there had been an end of mankind, if it had continued its progress with the same fury. Oppressed with misery from their very birth, and incapable of bearing the weight of the duties of society, they must have perished miserably.

What if the venom had been a little more exalted ? and it would certainly have grown so, if by good fortune a remedy had not been hit upon so

powerful as that which has been discovered. Perhaps this distemper, attacking the parts of generation, would next have attacked generation itself.

But why do we talk of the possibility of the destruction of human nature? Has it not already actually happened, and did not the deluge reduce it to one single family?

Can those who have any knowledge of nature, or any reasonable idea of God, imagine that matter and all these created things are but six thousand years old? That God deferred his works from all eternity, and made use of his creative power but yesterday? Was it because he could not, or would not use it before? But if he could not at one time, he could at another: it must therefore be, because he would not: but as there is no succession in God, if we admit that he willed any thing once, he willed it always, and from the beginning.

We must not therefore pretend to count the years of the world: the number of sands upon the seashore is no more to be compared to them than one instant.

Yet all historians talk of a first father: they describe human nature to us in her infancy. Is it not natural to think that Adam was saved from some common destruction, as Noah was from the deluge; and that these great events have been frequent upon earth since the creation of the world?

I was willing to let thee into these general ideas, before I gave a more particular answer to thy letter about the diminution of people which has happened within these seventeen or eighteen centuries: I shall shew thee, in a succeeding letter, that, independently of physical causes, there are moral ones which may have produced this effect.

Paris, 8th of the Moon

Chahban, 1718.

LETTER CXIII.

Usbek to the same.

THOU enquirest the reason why the earth is less peopled than it was antiently : and if thou considerest things maturely, thou wilt find that this great difference proceeds from that which has happened in our manners.

Since the Christian and Mahometan religions have divided the Roman world, the face of things is strangely altered : those two religions are far from being so favourable to the propagation of our species, as was that of those lords of the universe.

For among the antient Romans, polygamy was forbidden, wherein their religion had a very great advantage over the Mahometan ; and divorce was allowed, which gave it no less the advantage over the Christian.

I think nothing can be more contradictory, than the plurality of wives allowed by the holy Alcoran, and the command of satisfying them enjoined in the same book. Converse with your wives, says the prophet, because ye are as necessary to them as their vestments, and they are as necessary to you as your vestments. This is a precept which makes the life of a true Musulman terribly laborious. A man that has the four wives prescribed by the law, and only as many concubines and slaves ; must not he be quite oppressed with so many vestments ?

Your wives are your arable fields, says the prophet again : apply yourselves therefore to your tillage ; do good for your souls, and you shall one day find the fruits thereof.

I look upon a good Mussulman as a kind of athletic combatant, engaged in perpetual conflicts ; but quickly weakened, and sinking under his first fatigues, he faints in the very field of victory, and is in a manner buried beneath his own triumphs.

Nature always acts slowly, and, as one may say, sparingly : her operations are never violent : she requires temperance even in her productions : she constantly goes on by rule and measure : if she is precipitated, she presently falls into a languishing decay : she employs all her remaining strength merely for her preservation, quite losing her productive virtue and generative power.

To this state of debility we are always brought by our great number of women, who are fitter to exhaust than to satisfy us : it is very common among us to see a man with a prodigious seraglio, and yet a very small number of children ; and those few children too are generally puny and unhealthy, with a miserable taint of their father's weakness.

This is not all : these women being bound to a forced continence, must have people to guard them ; which can be none but eunuchs : religion, jealousy, and reason itself, will admit of no others to come near them : these guardians must be very numerous, both to preserve peace at home, among the continual bickerings of those women : and to prevent attempts from abroad. So that a man who has ten wives or concubines, must have no fewer eunuchs to guard them. But what a loss to society is such a number of men, who may be called dead from their very birth ! What depopulation must follow !

The female slaves kept in the seraglio to assist the eunuchs, those numbers of women, generally grow old there in an afflicting virginity : they cannot marry while they stay there ; and when their mistresses

are once used to them, they will rarely part with them.

Thus we see how many people of both sexes are taken up about the pleasures of one man : they are perfectly buried as to the state, and rendered totally useless in the propagation of the species.

Constantinople and Ispahan are the capitals of the two greatest empires in the world : there all things are decreed to meet as in their proper centre ; and thither every body repairs from all parts, drawn by a thousand various attractions. Yet even these mighty cities decay of themselves, and would be soon waste, if their sovereigns did not almost in every age transport whole nations to replenish them. I will handle this subject more fully in another letter

Paris, 13th of the Moon,

Chahban, 1718.

L E T T E R CXIV.

USBEK to the same.

THE Romans had not fewer slaves than we ; nay, they had more, but they made a better use of them.

So far were they from hindering the multiplication of their slaves by forcible methods ; that, on the contrary, they favoured it to the utmost of their power : they coupled them as much as possible by a sort of marriages : by this means they filled their houses with servants of all ages and sexes, and the state with people without number.

These childern, who, at the long-run, grew to be the wealth of their master, were born around him in surprizing multitudes : he alone had the care of their

maintenance and education : the fathers, eased of that burden, wholly followed their natural inclinations, and multiplied without being in any fear of having too large a family.

I have observed to thee, that, among us, all the slaves are employed in guarding our women, and nothing more ; that they are, with respect to the state, in a perpetual lethargy : so that we are forced to confine the cultivation of arts, and of our lands, to some freemen, and a few heads of families, who apply themselves that way as little as ever they can.

It was not so among the Romans : the commonwealth drew vast advantages from this nation of slaves. Every one of them had his *peculium*, which he possessed upon such conditions as his master thought fit : with this *peculium* he fell to work in that way which his genius inclined him to. One turned banker ; another applied himself to commerce by sea : one sold goods by retail ; another gave himself to some mechanic art, or else farmed and cultivated some piece of land : but all in general laboured with their whole power to improve his *peculium*, which procured him, at the same time, conveniences in his present state of servitude, and offered him a prospect of future liberty : this formed a laborious nation, and encouraged arts and industry.

These slaves, when grown rich by their diligence and labour, bought their freedoms, and became citizens. The commonwealth was thus replenished daily, and received new families into her bosom as fast as the old ones dropped off.

I may perhaps have occasion, in some following letters, to prove to thee, that the more men there are in any state, the more its commerce flourishes : I may also prove, that the more commerce flourishes, the more the number of people increases : these two things necessarily assist and favour each other.

And if this be so, how vastly must that prodigious number of slaves, who were always active and busy, have grown and increased? Industry and plenty gave them birth, and they in return gave birth to plenty and industry.

Paris, 16th of the Moon

Chahban, 1718.

L E T T E R CXV.

USBEK *to the same.*

WE have hitherto spoken only of the Mahometan countries, and inquired into the reason why they should be less populous than those which were under the dominion of the Romans: let us now examine what should have occasioned the same effect among the Christians.

Divorce was allowed in the Pagan religion, and forbidden in the Christian. This change, as little consequence as it may seem to be of at first, had, in time, dreadful effects, and such as can scarce be imagined.

This not only deprived marriage of all its charms, but struck at its very end: by striving to tie the knot closer, it was only loosened: and instead of uniting peoples hearts more strictly, as was intended, they were divided for ever.

In an action so voluntary a nature, and where the heart ought to be so much concerned, they mingled constraint, necessity, and even fate itself. They counted for nothing disgusts, ill-humour, and unsociableness of temper: they attempted to fix even the heart, the most variable and unconstant thing in nature: they fastened together, without the least prospect of a release, people who were quite weary

of each other, and almost constantly ill-matched: and practised the cruelty of those tyrants that used to bind living men to dead carcases.

Nothing used to contribute more to a mutual agreement, than a liberty of divorce: a husband and wife were the more inclined to bear with their domestic vexations, because they knew they had it in their power to put an end to them: and they often kept this power in their hands all their lives long without using it, upon this single consideration, that they might do it whenever they would.

It is not the same with the Christians, whose present vexations only make them almost mad to think how many more are to come: they have no other prospect in the discomforts of matrimony, but their duration, or rather their eternity: hence arise disgusts, jarrings, contempt; and all the while posterity suffers. Scarce are three years of wedlock past, but the essential design of it is neglected: thirty years of coldness ensue: private separations are formed, no less strong, and perhaps more pernicious, than if they were public: each lives apart, waiting single till the other's death: and all this to the prejudice of future generations. How often does the man, impatient of the eternity of his wife, give himself up to women of pleasure? A shameful course, and directly contrary to society, which, without accomplishing the end of marriage, represents at most but its pleasures!

If of two persons thus chained together, one be unfit for the design of nature, and the propagation of the species, either by age or constitution, that person buries the other with him, and makes her as useless as he is himself.

We are not therefore to wonder, that we see so many marriages among the Christians produce so little fruit: divorce is abolished: marriages ill sorted are

not to be repaired : the women do not, as among the Romans, pass through the hands of several husbands successively, who, on her way, made the best of her.

I dare affirm, that if a republic, like Sparta, where the citizens were under the eternal constraint of odd subtle laws, and in which there was but one family, namely, the republic ; it had been ordained, that the husbands should change their wives every year, it would have produced a people without number.

It is no easy matter to find out the reason which induced the Christians to abolish divorce. Marriage all over the world is nothing but a contract capable of all sorts of conventions ; and none ought to have been excluded from it, but such as would have weakened the main design of it : but the Christians do not behold it in this light : indeed they can hardly tell you their own notions of it themselves : they say it was not instituted for the pleasures of sense : on the contrary, as I have already shewn thee, they seem to aim at banishing them out of it as much as possible : but they would make you believe it is an image, a type, and a mystery, which I can make neither head nor tail of.

Paris, the 19th of the Moon
Chahban 1718.

LETTER CXVI.

USBEK to the same.

THE prohibition of divorce is not the only cause of the scarcity of people in Christian countries: the great number of eunuchs which they have among them is no less the occasion of it.

I mean the Priests and Dervises of both sexes, who devote themselves to perpetual continence: this among the Christians is the virtue of virtues: wherein I am at a loss to find out what they drive at; not comprehending how any thing should be a virtue which produces no fruit.

I cannot help thinking their doctors are guilty of a manifest contradiction in saying, that marriage is holy; and that celibacy, which is its direct opposite, is more holy still: without considering that in matter of precept and fundamental dogmas, the good is always the best.

The number of these people professing celibacy is prodigious: parents formerly used to condemn their children to it from their very cradles: now they devote themselves to it at fourteen years of age, which amounts to much the same thing.

This trade of continence has been the loss of more men than the most dreadful plagues and the most bloody wars that ever were in the world. You see in every religious house an eternal family, where nobody is born, but which is supplied at the expence of all the rest: these houses stand always open, like so many gulphs, where future generations are swallowed up for ever.

This policy differs widely from that of the antient Romans, who established penal laws against those

who avoided the bonds of matrimony, and were for enjoying a liberty so prejudical to the public.

I have yet spoken only of the Roman catholic countries. In the Protestant religion every body is free to propagate: it allows neither of priests nor Dervises: and if in the establishment of that religion, which brought back every thing to the standard of primitive times, its founders had not been eternally upbraided with incontinence even for what they did, we need not question but that after having rendered the practice of marriage universal, they would also have lightned the yoke, and quite removed the barrier, which in point of polygamy separates the Nazaræan from Mahomet. But, be that as it will, it is certain the religion of the protestants gives them a vast advantage over the catholics.

I might venture to affirm, that in the present state of things in Europe, it is impossible the catholic religion should subsist there five hundred years.

Before the diminution of the Spanish greatness, the Roman catholics were much much stronger than the protestants: these latter by degrees got to an equilibrium; and now the scale begins to turn on their side: this superiority will increase daily: the protestants will grow much more rich and powerful, and the Roman catholics will grow weaker.

The Protestant countries must be, and actually are, better peopled than the Roman catholic dominions: whence it follows, first, that their tributes are more considerable, because they increase in proportion to the number of those that pay them.

Secondly, that their lands are better cultivated. Lastly, that their trade flourishes more, because there are more people that have their fortunes to make; and where there are most wants, there will be most expeditious for satisfying those wants. When

there are only just people know to manure the lands, commerce must run to destruction ; and where there are only as many as are necessary in trade, the cultivation of the lands must be neglected : that is, in short, both must fall together ; because no-body can apply himself to one, but the other must suffer.

As to the Roman catholic countries, the cultivation of their lands is not only neglected, but their industry is even pernicious : it consists in nothing but learning five or six words of a dead language : a man that has this accomplishment need trouble himself no further about his fortune : the cloister offers him a life of tranquillity, which in the world would have cost him labour and pains.

This is not all : the dervises have in their hands almost all the wealth of the state : they are a society of misers that always are taking, but never restore : they daily heap up riches to buy estates with : this wealth, if one may use so bold an expression, falls as it were into a dead palsy ; farewell to circulation, to trade, arts, and manufactures.

There is no protestant prince but what raises upon his people ten times more taxes than the pope draws from his subjects : yet these latter are miserable, while the former live in affluence : commerce revives every thing among the one, while monkery checks and kills all recruit among the others.

Paris, 26th of the Moon
Chahban, 1718.

LETTER CXVII.

USBEK *to the same.*

WE have nothing more to say as to Asia and Europe : let us now proceed to Africa. We can do little more than speak of its coasts, being unacquainted with the innermost parts of the continent.

The Barbary coasts, where the Mahometan religion is established, are not so well-peopled as they were in the times of the Romans, for the reasons already laid down. As to the coasts of Guinea, they must be sadly stript in above two hundred years past, that the petty kings or heads of villages have made a trade of selling their subjects to the European princes, to be carried into their American colonies.

What is most singular is, that this very America, which yearly receives so many new inhabitants, is itself a desert, and is no manner of gainer by the continual losses of Africa. Those slaves being transported into a strange climate, die there by thousands : and the labour of the mines, in which both natives and strangers are perpetually employed ; the malignant exhalations that arise from them ; the quick-silver which they are continually using therein, destroy them every moment.

Nothing can be more extravagant, than to fling away the lives of infinite numbers of men, to get out of the bowels of the earth gold and silver : those metals in themselves absolutely useless, and which are riches only because they have been chosen for the marks of riches.

Pavis, the last of the Moon
Chahban, 1718.

LETTER CXVIII.

USBEK to the same.

THE fruitfulness of a people depends sometimes upon the most minute circumstances in the world; insomuch that very often there requires nothing more than a new turn in the imagination to make them much more numerous than before.

The Jews, so often exterminated and always multiplying, have repaired their continual losses and destructions, by the single hope which reigns in every family, that they shall have a potent king born in it, who shall be lord of the whole universe.

The antient kings of Persia had so many millions of subjects, only by means of that article in the religion of the Magi, that the most pleasing action to God that man could do, was to get a child, to manure a field, and to plant a tree.

If China is so prodigiously populous, it proceeds only from a particular way of thinking: for as the children look upon their fathers as a kind of gods, and respect them as such even in this life, and after their death honour them by sacrifices, wherein they believe that their souls being dipped in the Tyen resume a new life; every one is inclined to increase a family so dutiful in this life, and so necessary in the next.

On the contrary, the countries of the Mahometans grow every day thinner and thinner, by means of an opinion, which, holy as it is, has very pernicious effects when it is rooted in mens hearts. We look upon ourselves as sojourners upon earth, that ought to have all our thoughts fixed upon another

country: all useful and durable labours; all diligence to secure fortunes for our children; all schemes that have any view beyond this short frail life, we look upon as so many extravagancies. Indolent as to what is present, and undisturbed at what is to come, we take no care to repair public edifices, nor to clear uncultivated lands, nor to manure those which are fit to receive our cares: we live in a general insensibility, and leave every thing to providence.

It was a monstrous spirit of vanity that established among the Europeans the unjust law of primogeniture, which is so great a check to propagation, in that it turns the attention of a father only upon one of his children, and takes his eye off all the rest; in that it obliges him, in order to raise a great fortune for one, to neglect the settlement of the rest: lastly, in that it destroys the equality of the citizens, which is the great cause of their opulence.

Paris, 4th of the Moon

Rhamazan, 1718.

LETTER CXIX.

USBEK to the same.

THE countries inhabited by savages are commonly very thin of people, through the general aversion they have to labour and the culture of the earth. This unhappy aversion is so strong, that when they would make an imprecation upon one of their enemies, they wish him no greater curse, but to be forced to plough a field; thinking there are no exercises but hunting and fishing that are noble and worthy of their attention.

But as there often happen years, in which hunting and fishing fall short ; they are cut off by frequent famines : besides that, there is no contrary in the world so abounding in game and fish, as to subsist a great people ; because animals always fly from places that are too populous.

Besides, the hords of the savages, consisting each of two or three hundred inhabitants, being totally separate from each other, and having interests as different as those of two empires, can never support themselves ; not having the same resource as great states, whose parts all concur and assist each other.

There is among the savages another custom no less pernicious than the first ; which is the cruel practice in use among the women, of making themselves miscarry, that their bigness may not make them disagreeable to their husbands.

There are dreadful laws here against that crime : they are even carried to excess. Any woman that does not declare her conception to a magistrate, is punished with death if her fruit is lost : shame, modesty, nay, even accidents shall never excuse her.

Paris, the 9th of the Moon
Rhamazan, 1718.

LETTER CXX.

USBEK to the same.

THE common effect of colonies is to weaken the country out of which they are drawn, without peopling that to which they are sent. Men ought to remain where they are : there are distempers which are got by changing a good air for a bad ; and others which come from changing it at all.

When a country is deserted, it is a kind of sign that there is some particular ill quality in the nature of the climate: so that when we take men from a happy soil to send them into such a country, we do the very contrary to what we intend.

The Romans knew this by experience: they banished all their criminals into Sardinia, and sent Jews thither too: they were obliged to be contented under their loss, which the contempt they had for those wretches made very easy to them.

The great Cha-Abas, being minded to deprive the Turks of the means of their subsisting great armies upon his frontiers, transported almost all the Armenians out of their own country, and sent above twenty thousand families of them into the province of Guilan, where the most of them perished in a very short time.

All the migrations of people to Constantinople have had ill success.

The prodigious number of negroes before spoken of has not filled America.

Ever since the destruction of the Jews by Hadrian, Palestine has been without inhabitants.

It must therefore be granted that great depopulations are almost irreparable; because a people that is diminished to a certain degree, remains in the same condition; and if by chance they do gather up again, it requires whole ages to recruit their losses.

But if in a state of decay the least of the circumstances before-mentioned happens to concur; it is not only never to be made up again, but it grows worse and worse daily, and the nation is drawing to its end.

The expulsion of the Moors out of Spain is still as much felt as at the first day: their vacancy is so

far from closing up, that it grows every day greater and greater.

Since the depopulation of America, the Spaniards that came in the room of its antient inhabitants have not been able to repeople it: on the contrary, by a fatality which I might better call the divine justice, the destroyers destroy themselves, and rot away perpetually.

Princes therefore must not think to people great dominions by colonies: I do not say they never succeed: there are some climates so happy, that the inhabitants multiply therein continually; witness those isles which were peopled by a few distempered folks that some ships left there, where they immediately recovered their healths.

But though such colonies should always succeed, they rather divide than increase the power, unless they are of very small extent, and just such as are necessary to inhabit a place useful in commerce.

The Carthaginians, as well as the Spaniards, had found out America, or at least some great islands where they drove a prodigious trade: but when they found the number of their inhabitants decrease, that wise republic forbad that navigation.

I might venture to maintain, that instead of sending Spaniards into the Indies, they should rather bring all the Indians and all the Metifs into Spain: they should restore to that monarchy all its dispersed subjects: and if but half of those great colonies were left, Spain would be the most formidable power in Europe.

We may compare empires to a tree, whose branches, when too far extended, draw all the nourishment from the trunk, and are good for nothing but shade.

Nothing should cure princes more of the madness

of distant conquests, than the example of the Portuguese and Spaniards.

Those two nations having with inconceivable rapidity conquered immense kingdoms ; more amazed at their own victories, than the conquered nations were at their defeat, they next considered of methods to preserve them : they each took a different one.

The Spaniards, despairing of retaining the conquered nations in their subjection, resolved to exterminate them, and to send loyal subjects out of Spain to their room : never was horrid design so punctually executed. A people as numerous as all the nations in Europe put together, were cut off from the face of the earth by those Barbarians, who, when they discovered the Indies, seemed also resolved to discover to the world the utmost pitch of cruelty.

By this barbarity they kept those countries under their dominion. Judge by this what a fatal thing conquest is when these are its effects. For indeed this bloody expedient was the only one. How was it possible they should hold so many millions of men in their obedience ? How could they have carried on civil war at such a remote distance ? What would have become of them, if they had given time to those people to recover out of the consternation they were in, at the arrival of those new gods, and the terror of their thunder ?

As to the Portugueze, they took a quite different method : they did not make use of cruelties ; and therefore they were soon driven out of the countries they had discovered : the Dutch favoured the rebellion of those nations, and made their own advantage of it.

What prince would envy the fate of these conquerors ? Who would have any of these conquests upon

such conditions? The one were presently driven out of them; the others made them nothing but deserts, and rendered their own countries little better.

It is the fate of heroes to ruin themselves in conquering of countries which they lose again immediately, or in subduing of nations which they are forced to destroy, like that mad-man, who spent his estate in buying statues which he threw into the sea, and glasses which he broke as soon as he had them.

Paris, 8th of the Moon
Rhamazan, 1718.

LETTER CXXI.

USBEK to the same.

MILDNESS of government contributes vastly to the increase of mankind. All republics are a convincing proof of this; but none so much as Switzerland and Holland, two the worst countries in Europe, if we consider the nature of their land, and yet the fullest of people.

Nothing invites strangers more than liberty, and opulence, which always follows it; the former is courted for its own sake; and the calls of nature attract men to those countries where the latter is to be found.

The species multiplies wherever there is a sufficiency for the children, without lessening the substance of their parents.

The equality of the inhabitants, which usually produces an equality in their fortunes, brings plenty, and conveys life into every part of the body politic.

The case is otherwise where the government is despotic : the prince, the courtiers, and a few private men, ingross all the riches, whilst the rest languish in extreme want and misery.

If a man is in narrow circumstances, and finds himself likely to beget children poorer than himself, he will decline marrying : or if he does marry, he will be afraid of having too great a number of children, who may utterly undo him, and be in a worse condition themselves than their father was at first.

The rustic or peasant, I own, being once married, will people the commonwealth alike, whether he be rich or poor : he values not that : he is sure to leave his children one inheritance, his plow ; so nothing ever hinders him from blindly following the instinct of nature.

But of what use to a state are these heaps of children that pine away their lives in beggary and indigence ? Many of them perish as fast as they are born : they seldom or never prosper : feeble and weak, they die by retail a thousand different ways, or by wholesale are swept away by frequent popular distempers, which a bad diet and poverty never fail to produce : such as escape free, attain the age of manhood, without having the strength of it, and droop away the remainder of their lives in a wretched destitution even of necessaries.

Men are like plants that never flourish if they are not well cultivated : among a miserable people, the species loses of its number, and sometimes degenerates over and above.

France can furnish us with a sufficient proof of this. In the late wars, the fear of being listed for soldiers obliged most of the young men to marry ; and that too in a very unripe age, and in the very bosom of poverty. From those marriages sprung

multitudes of children, that are now missing in France, and whom misery, famine, and distempers, have caused to disappear.

Now, if in so happy a climate, so regular a government as France, there is room for such observations as these; what shall we say of other nations?

Paris, 23d of the Moon

Rhamazan, 1718.

L E T T E R CXXII.

USBEK to MOLLAH MEHEMET ALI, keeper of the three sepulchres at Com.

WHAT avail the fastings of the Imaums, and the sackcloths of the Mollahs? Twice has the hand of God been heavy on the children of the law: the sun wraps itself up in clouds, or if he shines out, it is only to make their overthrow the more conspicuous: their armies assemble, and are scattered like dust before the wind.

The empire of the Osmanlins has received two such blows it never felt before; a Christian Mufti † has much ado to keep it from falling: the grand Vizir of Germany is the scourge of God, sent to chastise the followers of Omar; where-ever he moves, he carries with him the wrath of heaven, and pours it forth upon their rebellion and perfidiousness.

Sacred Spirit of the Imaums, thou weepest night and day over the children of the prophet whom the detestable Omar has caused to go astray: thy bowels are moved at their misfortunes: thou desirest

† Cardinal Alberoni, who persuaded the king of Spain, to fall upon the emperor in 1717, when he was engaged in a war with the Turks.

their conversion, and not their destruction : thou desirest to see them united under the banner of Hali by the tears of the saints, and not dispersed among the mountains and in the desarts, by the terror of the infidels.

Paris, 1st of the Moon
Chalval, 1717.

LETTER CXXIII.

RICA to ***

Men are at a loss, in all religious, concerning the pleasures designed for such as have lived well. The wicked may easily be scared by a long detail of pains and torments, with which they are threatened : but as for the virtuous, what promises to make to them, men know not : it seems as if it were essential to the nature of all pleasures to be short lived : fancy can hardly figure to itself any other sort.

I have seen descriptions of paradise capable of disgusting all men of right understanding : some represent the happy shades incessantly playing on the flute : others condemn them to the punishment of eternally walking about : others again will have those above to be always musing on their mistress here below, not thinking a hundred millions of years term long enough to make them lose the relish of these amorous inquietudes.

This brings to my mind a story I heard told by one who had been in the Mogul's country ; it shews that the Indian priests are no less fruitful than the others in the ideas they have of the pleasures of paradise.

A woman, that had just lost her husband, went in form to the governor of the town to beg his permission to let her burn herself; but as in all countries under the Mahometans they abolish this cruel custom as much as possible, he gave her a flat refusal.

When she saw her prayers ineffectual, she flew into a violent passion: "Was ever such hard usage as this," cried she, "that a poor woman should not have leave to burn herself when she has a mind to it! was ever the like seen? My mother, my aunt, my sisters, they all burned themselves; and when I come to ask this cursed governor's leave to do the like, he falls into a passion, and storms at me like a mad-man."

There happened to be present a young Bonze, Infidel, says the governor to him, this is your doing, it was you that instilled this fury into the woman's brain. Indeed, not I, says he; I never spoke to her in all my life; but if she will be ruled by me, she shall finish her sacrifice; she will do an action well pleasing to the god Brama, nor will she fail of being well rewarded, for she shall surely find her husband in the other world, and be married to him over again. How? cries the woman, in a terrible fright, find my husband again? I will not burn myself: burn myself for him? a peevish, jealous-pated wretch, and so old too, that if the god Brama has not wrought some change in him, I am sure he has no occasion for me: burn myself for him? — No, not the tip of my little finger to redeem him from the deepest hole in hell: two old Bonzes, whom I consulted, and who knew what manner of life I led with him, took care, I thank them, to conceal this part from me: but if the god Brama hath no other present to make me, than this, he may even

" keep it himself; I will have none of that beatitude.
 " Mr. Governor, I here renounce my religion, and
 " turn Mahometan: and, as for you, said she, look-
 " ing on the Bonze, you may go and tell my hus-
 " band that I never enjoyed a better state of health
 " in all my life."

Paris, 2d of the Moon.

Chalval, 1718.

L E T T E R CXXIV.

RICA to USBEK.

I EXPECT thee here to-morrow; mean time I send thee thy letters which came frome Ispahan: mine advise that the great Mogul's embassador has been ordered to withdraw out of the kingdom. It is added, that the king's uncle is securued, the prince that was intrusted with the king's education, and that they have conveyed him to a strong castle, where he is very strictly confined; and withal, that they have degraded him, and stripped him of all his honours. I am concerned at this prince's misfortune, and lament his fate.

I own to thee, Usbek, that I never saw the tears of any person trickle down, without being moved with compassion. I have a feeling for the unhappy, as if none but they were men: and even those in power, towards whom I have a heart of stone when they are in the height of their prosperity, I cannot help loving them the moment they fall into disgrace.

And, indeed, in their prosperity, what have they to do with an impertinent tenderness? It looks too much like equality: they much rather chuse respect,

which requires no manner of return; but as soon as they are fallen from their grandeur, nothing but our lamentations can make them recal to their minds the idea of their former high condition.

Methinks there is something very natural, and even very great, in the saying of a certain prince, who being just ready to fall into his enemies power, seeing his courtiers round about him all in tears, I find, says he, by your tears, that I am still your king.

Paris, 3d of the Moon,
Chalval, 1718.

LETTER CXXV.

RICA to IBBEN, at Smyrna.

THOU hast a thousand times heard of the famous king of Sweden; he was besieging a place in a kingdom called Norway; as he was visiting the trenches with only one engineer, he received a shot in his head, which killed him upon the spot. His chief [†] minister was immediately secured, the states met, and sentenced him to lose his head.

He was accused of a very high crime, namely, calumniating the nation, and creating in the king a disfidence of his people; an offence, in my opinion, worthy of a thousand deaths.

For, in short, if it is an ill action to blacken in the mind of one's prince the lowest of his subjects, what is it to traduce a whole people, and rob them of the good-will of him, whom providence has set up to make them happy?

[†] Paron Gortz.

I would have men to speak to kings as the angels speak to our holy prophet.

Thou knowest that in the sacred banquets, where the lord of lords descends from the most sublime throne in the world, to communicate himself to his slaves, I used to make it a severe law to myself to curb an unruly tongue. I was never seen to let slip the least word that could be offensive to the meanest of his subjects : though I was sometimes obliged to lay aside sobriety, yet I never quitted my honesty ; and in that trial of our fidelity I risked my life, but never my virtue.

I know not how it happens, but there is hardly ever a prince so bad, but his minister is worse : if he commits any ill action he is almost always prompted to it : which makes that the ambition of princes is never so dangerous, as baseness of soul in his counsellors : but is it not strange for a man that stepped into the ministry but yesterday, that perhaps to-morrow will be out again, in a moment to become an enemy to himself, his family, his country, and a nation yet to come out of the loins of that very people whose destruction he is going to compass ?

A prince has passions, the minister operates upon those passions ; it is by them he directs his ministry : he has no other aim, nor will have any other aim : the courtiers mislead him by their flattery, and he more dangerously flatters him with his counsels, with the designs he puts him upon, and the maxims which he lays down to him.

Paris, the 25th of the Moon
Saphar, 1719.

LETTER CXXVI.

RICA to USBEK.

I WAS passing the other day over the Pont Neuf with a friend of mine : he met a man of his acquaintance, who he said was a geometrician ; and indeed his whole appearance spoke so much, for he was in a profound meditation : my friend was forced to pull him by the sleeve a considerable time, and to shake and jogg him to make him descend to him : so busy was his head about a curve, which perhaps he had been hammering his brains upon for eight days before : great civilities passed between them, and they mutually informed each other in the news of the learned world : these discourses led them to the door of a coffee-house, wherein I entered along with them.

I observed that our geometrician was received by every body with great officiousness, and that the boys of the coffee-house paid him much more respect than they did to two † musqueteers who were in the corner of the room ; as for him, he seemed to like the place he was in very well : he unwrinkled his brow a little, and began to look chearful and laugh, as if he had not the least tincture of geometry in his whole composition.

Mean-time, with great exactness he measured every thing that was said in coversation : he resembled one that in a garden with his sword cuts off the heads of flowers that rise up above the rest : a slave, nay, a martyr to regularity, he was as much offend-ed at any thing that looked like a flight of wit, as a

† Part of the king's household troops.

tender eye is by too strong a light : nothing to him was indifferent, provided it was true ; and accordingly his conversation was pretty singular. He was come that day out of the country, in company with a man who had been to see a noble seat, and very fine gardens : for his part, he saw nothing in it but a building of sixty foot in front, by five and thirty in depth, and a wood of ten acres, in the form of a parallelogram : he would have had the rules of perspective observed in such a manner, as that the walks of the avenues might have appeared throughout of one and the same breadth ; and he would have laid down an infallible method of doing it : he seemed hugely pleased with a dial he met with there of a very odd contrivance, and was furiously angry at a learned man that sat next me, who unhappily asked him if the dial shewed the Babylonian hours. Another in the room was talking of the bombarding the castle of Fontarabia : upon which he presently gives us the properties and nature of the line which the bombs had described in the air, and being overjoyed at this his knowlege, he never so much as enquired, nor desired to know, what success the bombardment had. Another person was complaining, that he had been ruined the winter before by an inundation : I am glad of it with all my heart, says the geometrician, I find I was right in the observation I made, and that there fell at least two inches of water upon the earth, more than the year before.

A moment after this he went out, and we followed him : walking very fast, and neglecting to look before him, he ran full butt against another man : it was a violent shock, and each of them rebounded back, in proportion to his respective velocity and bulk. Falling foul on one another in this manner, it was some time before they could recover them-

selves : at least the other man, with his hand up at his fore-head, says to the geometrician, I am very glad you run against me, for I have great news to tell you : I have just now published my Horace. Horace ! says the geometrician : it has been published these two thousand years. You do not understand me, says the other : it is a translation of that antient author, which I have just now published : I have been twenty years employed in translations.

How, Sir ? said the gemetrician ; have you been twenty years without thinking ? You speak for others, and they think for you ? Do not you believe, Sir, says the scholar, that I have done the public considerable service in making the reading of good authors familiar to them ? I do not absolutely say so : I have as great a value as others for the sublime geniuses whom you dress up in disguise : but you will never be like them in the least : for if you translate to eternity, you will never be translated yourself.

Translations are like copper money, which in proportion have the same value as a piece of gold, nay, and are of much greater use among the people ; but still they are light, and have a base alloy.

You say, that you are for reviving among us those illustrious dead ; and I own that you give them indeed a body, but you do not endow them with life, there is still wanting a spirit to animate them.

Why do not you rather apply yourself to the search of a thousand glorious truths, which may be easily come at by a geometrical calculation ? After this short admonition they parted, not over-satisfied with one another, you may well believe.

Paris, the last of the Moon

Rebiab, 1719.

LETTER CXXVII.

RICA to ***

I SHALL entertain thee in this letter, with an account of a certain people called INTELLIGENCERS, or NEWS-MONGERS, who meet in a spacious garden, where their idleness continually finds employment : they are of no manner of use to the state, and have been talking these fifty years to as much purpose, as if they had so long just said nothing at all : however, they fancy themselves considerable people, because their thoughts are taken up with magnificent projects, and are busied in nothing but great affairs.

The basis of their conversation is an impudent and ridiculous curiosity : there is no cabinet so close, which they do not pretend to penetrate into : they will not allow themselves to be ignorant of any thing : they know the exact number of our august sultan's wives, how many children he gets in a year ; although they are at no expence for spies, they are thoroughly informed of the measures he is taking to reduce the emperor of the Turks, and that of the Moguls.

They have no sooner exhausted the present, but they shoot themselves into the future ; and being before-hand with providence, they prevent the Almighty in all sublunary proceedings : they lead a general by the hand ; and after they have praised him for a thousand fooleries which he never did commit, they prepare a thousand more for him, which he never will.

Armies they make fly like cranes, and walls fall down as if they were made of pasteboard : they have

bridges upon all rivers, secret passages through all mountains, immense magazines amidst burning sands : they want nothing but their senses.

A man with whom I lodge received the following letter from one of this tribe, which I took a copy of, on account of its singularity.

SIR,

I AM seldom mistaken in my conjectures, on the affairs of the times : the first of January 1711, I foretold that the emperor Joseph would die in the course of a year : it is true, that as he was then in very good health, I thought I should expose myself to be laughed at, if I had been explicit ; for which reason I made use of terms somewhat enigmatical ; but people that know how to reason, understood me perfectly well. The 17th of April, in the same year, he died of the small pox.

As soon as the war was declared between the emperor and the Turks, I went and looked out for all the gentlemen of our fraternity in every corner of the Tuilleries : I convened them to meet at the Fountain, and foretold them that Belgrade would be besieged and taken : I was so fortunate as to find my prediction fulfilled : it is true, that about the middle of the siege I wagered a hundred pistoles that it would be taken the 18th of August* ; it was not taken till the day after. That a man should lose that was so near the game !

When I found the Spanish fleet landing their men in Sardinia, I judged they would make a conquest of it : as I said so it happened : puffed up with this success, I added, that this victorious

fleet would go and make a descent at Final, in order to conquer the Milanese. Finding this notion not readily received, I resolved to support it with a high hand : I bettered fifty pistoles, and lost them too : for that dog Alberoni, in breach of treaties, sent his fleet into Sicily, and tricked at once two great politicians, the duke of Savoy, and myself. This, Sir, has so confounded me, that I am now resolved to prophesy on, but never to lay wagers again. Formerly this practice of laying wagers was unknown in the Tuilleries ; and the late M. the C. d. L. did not allow of them ; but since a pack of pert coxcombs have intruded amongst us, we know not whereabouts we are. We no sooner open our mouths to tell a piece of news, but up starts one of these young fellows, and challenges you, he will lay you any wager to the contrary.

Another day, as I was opening my manuscript, and fitting my spectacles to my nose, one of these bullies laying hold of the interval between the first word and the second, says to me, I will bett a hundred pistols upon the negative : I made as if I did not mind what he said, and proceeding in a louder voice than before, says I, the mareschal de *** having intelligence . . . It is false, says he, your news is always full of impertinence, there is not the least spark of common sense in it.

I beg, Sir, that you will do me the favour to lend me thirty pistoles ; for I must needs say this wagering has very much disordered my affairs : I send you the copy of two letters, which I wrote to the chief minister.

I am, etc.

LETTER from the INTELLIGENCER to the CHIEF
MINISTER.

MY LORD,

' I AM the most zealous subject the king ever had ;
 ' it was I that obliged one of my friends to execute
 ' a project which I had formed of a book, to demon-
 ' strate that Lewis the grand was the greatest prince
 ' that ever deserved that title. I have been long em-
 ' ployed upon another work, which will yet do more
 ' honour to our nation, if your lordship pleases to
 ' grant me a patent : my design is to prove, that
 ' since the beginning of the monarchy, the French
 ' have never once been beaten ; and that all that has
 ' been hitherto said to the contrary by the historians,
 ' are downright lies ; I am obliged to set them right
 ' in many particulars, and I will be bold to say, that
 ' no man exceeds me in the critical part.

I am, my Lord, etc.

MY LORD,

' HAVING lost M. the C. d. L. we beg you would
 ' be pleased to let us chuse a president : our confe-
 ' rences are in great disorder, and the affairs of state
 ' are not discussed therein with that regularity they
 ' used to be : our young men behave themselves with-
 ' out the least regard to their seniors, and with-
 ' out any disciple among themselves : it is the very
 ' counsel of Rehoboam, wherein the young men pre-
 ' scribe to the old. In vain we represent to them,
 ' that we were in peaceable possession of the Tuille-
 ' ries twenty years before they were born ; I believe
 ' they will quite drive us out in time ; and when they
 ' have obliged us to quit those places, where we have
 ' so often called up the ghosts of our French heroes,

" we must go and hold our conferences in the king's
" garden, or some more remote place.

I am, etc.

Paris, the 7th of the Moon
Gemmadi 2d, 1719.

L E T T E R CXXVIII.

RHEDI to RICA, at Paris.

ONE of the things which most exercised my curiosity after my arrival in Europe, was the history and origin of republics. Thou knowest that generally the Asiatics have not so much as the least idea of this sort of government, and that their imagination never extended so far as to comprehend, there could possibly be any other sort than the despotic throughout the world.

The first governments were monarchical: it was only by chance, and length of time, that republics were formed.

Greece having been swallowed up by a deluge, new inhabitants came to people it: she had almost all her colonies from Egypt, and the nearest Asiatic countries: and those countries being governed by kings, the people that came out of them were governed in the like manner. But the tyranny of those princes growing too heavy, the people shook off the yoke, and from the broken remains of so many kingdoms arose those republics which made Greece so very flourishing, the only polite country amidst Barbarians.

The love of liberty, and aversion to kings, preserved Greece a long time in a state of independ-

ence, and very far extended the republican government. The cities of Greece found allies in Asia Minor: they sent thither colonies as free as themselves, which were so many ramparts against the attempts of the kings of Persia. This was not all: Greece peopled Italy; Italy Spain, and perhaps Gaul. It is notorious that the great Hesperia, so famous among the antients, was at the beginning Greece, which was looked upon by its neighbours as the seat of felicity: the Greeks, not finding at home that happy country, went and looked for it in Italy; those of Italy in Spain; those of Spain in Boetica, or Portugal: so that all these regions went by this name among the antients. These Greek colonies carried along with them a spirit of liberty, which they had assumed from that kindly climate. And accordingly we seldom or never, in those remote times, meet with monarchies in Italy, Spain, or either of the Gauls. We shall see by and by, that the people of the north, and of Germany, were no less free than the others: and if there are appearances of any thing like royalty among them, it is because their leaders of armies, or heads of republics, were mistaken for kings.

All this happened in Europe: as for Asia and Africa, they were ever oppressed with despotism; excepting some towns of Asia Minor already taken notice of, and the republic of Carthage in Africa.

The world was divided between two powerful republics, Rome and Carthage: nothing is so well known as the beginning of the Roman republic, and nothing so little known as the origin of that of Carthage: we are utterly ignorant of the succession of the African princes after Dido, nor do we know by what means they came to lose their power. The prodigious increase of the Roman republic would

have been a great blessing to mankind, had there not been that unreasonable difference between the citizens of Rome and the conquered nations ; had they given to the governors of provinces a more limited authority ; had they paid due regard to those divine laws made to restrain their tyranny ; and had they not, in order to silence those laws, employed the very treasures which their rapine and injustice had accumulated together.

Liberty seems to be calculated to the genius of the nations of Europe, and slavery adapted to that of the Asiatics. In vain did the Romans offer that invaluable treasure to the Cappadocians ; that worthless nation refused it, and courted servitude with the same ardour as other nation pursued liberty.

Cæsar crushed the Roman republic, and brought it under arbitrary power.

Europe groaned a long time beneath the military and violent government ; and the Roman mildness was changed into a hard-hearted oppression.

Mean while infinite numbers of unknown nations swarmed from out the North ; spread themselves like torrents through all the Roman provinces ; and finding it as easy a thing to make conquests as to exercise their piracies, they dismembered those provinces, and make kingdoms of them. These people were free ; and they so confined the authority of their kings, that they were, properly speaking, no more than chieftains, or generals. Thus those kingdoms, though founded in force, felt not the yoke of a conqueror. When the nations of Asia, namely, the Turks and the Tartars, made any conquests, they being accustomed to the will and pleasure of one single person, thought of nothing more than bringing him new subjects, and by the force of arms establish his violent authority : but the northern nations be-

ing free in their own country, when they had seized the Roman provinces, took care not to bestow on their chiefs too large a power. Nay, some of them, the Vandals, for instance, in Africa, the Goths in Spain, deposed their kings whenever they were dissatisfied with them, and the others too abridged the authority of the prince a thousand ways: a great number of lords took share of it with him; a war was never entered upon without their consent, the plunder was divided between the general and the soldiers; no taxation in favour of the prince; the laws were made in assemblies of the whole nation. Such was the fundamental principle of all those states that were formed out of the wrecks of the Roman empire.

Venice, 10th of the Moon

Regeb, 1719.

LETTER CXXIX.

RICA to ***.

SOME five or six months ago I was in a coffee-house, where I observed a gentleman very well habited in company with others, who were very attentive to him: the subject of his discourse was the pleasures of Paris, and he lamented his condition, that he was obliged to live in the country. I have, says he, fifteen thousand livres yearly income in land; I should be much happier with a fourth part of it in money and portable effects. It is to no purpose to press my tenants, and sue them for arrears, I make them but the more insolent: I never yet could see a hundred pistoles together: were I to owe ten thousand

livres, they would seize all my lands, and I should be utterly undone.

I went my way without much heeding what he had been saying : but happening yesterday to be in that neighbourhood, I entered into the same house, and saw a grave man with a pale long visage, who in the midst of five or six talkers seemed to be very dull and melancholy ; at last breaking out, Gentlemen, says he, I am ruined ; I have not wherewithal to buy me bread ; I have actually by me two hundred thousand livres in bank notes, and a hundred thousand crowns in specie : I am in a terrible condition : I thought myself rich, and am a beggar : had I, methinks, but one slip of land to retire to, I might be sure of something ; but I have not so much land as will lie under the circumference of my hat.

I chanced to turn about, and saw another man making ugly faces, as if he had been possessed. Who shall we trust, cried he ? To lend a sum of money out of pure friendship, and the rascal to pay it me now ! Base treachery ? Well, he may do as he pleases, I shall never have a good opinion of him again as long as I live.

At his elbow sat another, shabbily dressed, who lifting up the eggs of his eyes ; Heaven prosper, cries he, the schemes of our ministers ! May I see stock at two thousand, and all the footmen in Paris richer than their masters. I had the curiosity to ask his name, and was told he was extremely poor, and had as poor a trade. He is a genealogist, and hopes that his trade will turn up trump, if fortune-making continues thus ; and that all the rich upstarts will have occasion for him to reform their name, new mould their ancestors, and embellish their coaches : he fancies that he will have the making as many men of quality as he pleases, and he skips for joy that he shall have full employment.

Afterwards came in an old, pale, withered skeleton of a man, whom I knew to be a coffee-house politician before he sat down : he was not of the number of those, who have a triumphant assurance against all vicissitudes of fortune, and presage nothing but victories and trophies : no, he was one of those tremblers who deal in nothing but sad news. Affairs have but an ill aspect on the side of Spain, says he ; we have no cavalry upon the frontier, and it is to be feared prince Pio, who is very strong in horse, will lay all Languedoc under contribution.

Over-against me sat a philosopher, none of the best accoutred, who took this news-monger into his compassion, and lifted up his shoulders as fast as the other did his voice : I drew near to him, and he whispers me, that puppy there, says he, has been this hour entertaining us with his fears for Languedoc ; whereas I discovered yesterday a spot in the sun, which, if it should spread, would confound the whole frame of nature, and yet no body has heard me utter a single syllable all this while.

Paris, 17th of the Moon

Rhamazan, 1719.

L E T T E R CXXX.

RICA, to * * *.

I WENT the other day to see a large library in a convent of Dervises, who are the depositaries or trustees appointed to keep it ; but they are obliged to let any body come in at certain hours.

Entering in, I saw a grave man walking about in the midst of numberless multitudes of volumes ; I made up to him, and desired him to tell me what

books those were that were better bound than the rest : Sir, says he, I am here in a strange land, I do not know a single soul in it : I am frequently asked the same question as you now ask me ; but do not think I will go read all these books, in order to satisfy them ; however my library-keeper shall answer your question, for he is employed night and day in unfolding these things : he is a good-for-nothing creature, and a dead weight upon our hands ; for he does not work for the convent ; but hark, the bell rings for dinner ; such as are at the head of a community, as I am, ought ever to be the first at all the exercises. This said, the monk pushes me out, locks fast the door, and in a moment disappeared as if he had flown upon the wings of the wind.

Paris, 21st of the Moon

Rhamazan, 1719.

LETTER CXXXI.

RICA 10 * * *

THE next day I went again to this library, where I found quite another man from him I had seen the day before : he had an air of simplicity, his physiognomy sprightly, and his address easy. As soon as I had made him acquainted with my business, which was no more than to know what those fine gilt books were, he prepared to satisfy my curiosity ; and seeing I was a stranger, he was so kind, as to take some pains to instruct me. Father, says I to him, what are these bulky volumes that fill all this side of the library ? They are, says he to me, the interpreters of the scripture. There is a world of them, says I ; the scripture must needs have been ve-

ry dark in former times, and very clear now; are there any doubts still remaining to be solved? Are there any points still contested? Good God, points still contested, answers he! why, there are as many as there are lines. Ay, says I to him; and, pray, what have all these authors been doing? These authors, replies he, have not been seeking in the scriptures for what ought to be believed, but for what they themselves believe: they have not looked upon it as a book containing the doctrines which they ought to receive, but as a work that might give authority to their own conceits: and this has made them corrupt the sense thereof in every part, and put to the rack every individual passage in it: it is a country, where men of all sects make descents, and go to it as to a place of plunder: it is a field of battle, wherein all nations encounter, join frequent battle, fall foul upon one another, and skirmish it a thousand different ways.

Next them, you see the ascetics, or books of devotion: and there, books of morality of far greater use: now come those of theology, doubly unintelligible, both for the matter they treat of, and the manner they treat it in. The works of the mystics, that is to say, the devotees with a tender heart. Dear father, says I to him, stop a little: let me hear something of these same mystics. Sir, says he, devotion warms a heart that is disposed to tenderness, and causes it to send up to the brain spirits, whereby the brain is in like-manner heated; from whence arise ecstasies and rapturous transports. This condition is the delirium of devotion: it oftentimes improves, or rather degenerates into quietism: you know a quietist is made up of a mad-man, a devotee, and a libertine.

Those yonder are the casuists that disclose to the

day the secrets of the night ; that form in their imagination all the monsters the dæmon of love is capable of producing ; which they bring together, compare them, and make them the eternal object of their thoughts : it is well if their heart is not an accomplice in the abuse, and joins with and promotes all those excesses so naturally described, and so nakedly painted.

You see, Sir, I think freely, and speak what I think, without reserve : I am by nature plain and sincere ; much more towards you who are a stranger, desirous to know things, and to know them as they really are of themselves. I might, if I had a mind to it, have spoke these things to you in the height of admiration ; I might have said at every word, this is divine, that is venerable, the other marvellous : and the consequence of all this had been, either I must have thought you a fool, or you me a knave.

Here we broke off : an unexpected business called away the Dervise, and so we adjourned our conversation to the next day.

Paris, 23d of the Moon

Rhamazan, 1719.

LETTER CXXXII.

RICA to the same.

I CAME again at the appointed hour, and was led by my man exactly to the same place where we parted. There, says he, are the grammarians, the glossers, and the commentators. Father, says I to him, is it not possible for these gentry to be without a word of sense ? Yes, says he, they may very easily be without it ; nor indeed does it appear that they have

any; and yet their works are never a-whit the worse for it; which is a great conveniency to them. That is very true, said I to him: and I know several philosophers that would do very well to apply themselves to these sorts of sciences.

Those there, said he, are the orators, that have the faculty of persuasion, without the help of reasoning; and the geometricians, who oblige a man, in spite of himself, to be persuaded, and force him to be convinced, like so many tyrants. Those are books of metaphysics, that handle high matters, and wherein you meet with Infinite at every step you take: yonder are the naturalists, who will needs have it, there is as much of the marvellous in the simplest machine of our artificers, as in the œconomy of the vast universe. Books of medicine, those monuments of the weakness and infirmity of nature, and of the power of art, which make mankind tremble when they treat even of the slightest distempers, as if death was at our elbow; but which restore us again to a perfect security, when they talk of the virtue of medicines, as if we were become immortal.

Close by these, you see the books of anatomy, nothing near so copious in describing the parts of the human body, as in giving them hard names; which neither cures the patient's distempers, nor the physician's ignorance.

There is chymistry for you, that dwells sometimes in a jail, and sometimes in a mad-house; both of them mansions equally proper for its reception.

Those there are the books of occult science, or rather ignorance: they deal in a kind of witchcraft, execrable in most people's opinions, but, in mine, lamentable. Such likewise are the books of judicial astrology. How say you, father? of judicial astrology! replied I, with some emotion: why those are the

books that are in most esteem with us in Persia : they regulate every action of our lives, and determine us in all our undertakings : astrologers are properly our directors ; nay, more, they share in the government of the state. If it be so, replied he, you live under a worse yoke than that of reason : for this is the strangest empire of all empires : I heartily pity a family, and much more a whole nation, that yields itself to be so tyrannized over by planets. To which I replied, We make use of astrology, as you do of algebra : every nation has its politics : all the astrologers put together never committed so many follies in Persia, as one single † algebrist of yours has done here. Think you that the fortuitous concurrence of the stars is not as sure a rule to go by, as the fine reasonings of your system-maker ? Were the voices to be gathered upon this subject in France and Persia, it would afford a glorious field of triumph to astrology : you would see the mathematicians humbled with a vengeance : what knock-down corollaries would they draw out against them !

Our dispute was interrupted, and so we parted.

Paris, 26th of the Moon

Rhamazan, 1719.

LETTER CXXXIII.

RICA to the same.

THE next time we met, my learned conductor led me into a private closet. These, said he, are the books of modern history : first and foremost behold the historians of the church and the popes ;

† Mr. Law, famous for his skill in accompts, and infamous for the use he made of it

books which I read to edify by, but which very often have a quite contrary effect upon me.

Yonder are those that have writ of the decay of the formidable Roman empire, which sprung out of the ruins of so many monarchies ! and upon the fall whereof so many new ones were formed : an infinite number of barbarous nations, as unknown as the countries they inhabited, started up on a sudden, over-run it, ravaged it, pulled it to pieces, and founded all those kingdoms which you now see in Europe : properly speaking, these people were not barbarians, because they were free : but they became afterwards, when they submitted to an absolute power ; as most of them did, and lost that glorious liberty, conformable to reason, humanity, and nature.

Those are the historians of Germany, an empire which is but a faint shadow of the first empire ; but which, in my opinion, is the only power upon earth that has not been weakened by disunion, nay, more, the only one that gathers strength in proportion to her losses ; and which, though slow in improving advantages, becomes invincible by its defeats.

Here you have the historians of France, where at first you see the power of the kings in the embryo ; twice it dies and revives again, then for several ages together you find it in a languishing condition ; but insensibly gaining strength and accretion from all parts, at last it climbs to its utmost pinnacle : like certain rivers which in their course lose their waters, or conceal themselves beneath the earth ; then appearing again, and being swelled with the accession of other rivers, they violently sweep away whatever opposes their passage.

The next I present you with is the Spanish nation sallying out of certain mountains : the Mahometan

princes as insensibly reduced as they had rapidly conquered : so many kingdoms reunited under one vast monarchy, which was become almost the only monarchy in the world ; till, overcharged with its false opulence, she lost her strength, and even her reputation, and preserved nothing but the pride of her first prowess.

Those there are the historians of England, wherein you see liberty incessantly rising out of the flames of discord and sedition ; the prince continually tottering upon an immovable throne ; an impatient people, wise in the midst of madness, and which being mistress of the sea (a thing never before heard of) intermixes commerce with empire.

Next them are the historians of that other queen of the sea, the republic of Holland, so respected in Europe, and so formidable in Asia, where her factors behold kings prostrate at their feet.

The historians of Italy set before your eye a nation once mistress of the world, now a slave to other nations ; her princes disunited and impotent, and having no other attribute of sovereignty but an empty speculative polity.

See here the historians of the republics ; Switzerland, the image of liberty ; Venice, whose whole support lies in her oeconomy ; and Genoa, that has nothing to be proud of but her buildings.

Here you have those of the north ; and among others Poland, who makes so ill an use of her liberty, and of the privilege she has in electing her kings ; it looks as if she had a mind thereby to comfort her neighbours for the loss of both.

Here we parted, upon promise to meet again the next day.

Paris, the 2d of the Moon

Chalval, 1719.

LETTER CXXXIV.

RICA to the same.

THE next day he took me into another closet. These are the poets, said he, that is to say, those authors whose trade it is to put shackles upon good sense, and smother reason with heaps of flowers, as was the custom formerly to bury women beneath their ornaments and fine cloths: you know them well enough, they are not uncommon among you orientals, where a hotter sun seems to fire the very imaginations of you.

Here are the epic poems. Epic poems! says I: what are they? In troth, says he, I do not know: the critics say, there never were but two, and that all the rest that go by that name are but counterfeits: this likewise is what I am equally ignorant of: they say further, it is impossible to make any more of the sort; which is yet more surprizing.

Here we have the dramatic poets, which in my opinion are poets indeed, or rather may be called THE POETS, by way of excellence; they are the masters of the passions: there are two sorts of them; the comic, which move us agreeably, and the tragic, which disturb us, and put us into violent agitations.

These here are the lyrics, whom I despise as much as I esteem the others, and who make an harmonious extravagance of their art.

Next come the authors of idylls and eclogues, which please even the courtiers by the idea they give them of a certain tranquillity which they have not, and which they represent to them as inherent to the condition of shepherds.

Of all the authors that we have hitherto been turning over, we come now to the most dangerous ; and they are your sharpeners of epigrams : a sort of fine small dart, which makes a deep wound not to be reached by any medicine.

Here you see the romance-makers, a species of poets, and who strain alike both the language of the mind, and that of the heart ; who spend their lives in seeking after nature, and never find her, and who create heroes as unaccountably monstrous as winged dragons and hippocentaurs.

I have seen, says I, some of your romances ; and were you to see ours you would be much more shocked at them ; they are full as unnatural, and, besides that, extremely crafht by our manners : a ten years' passion is required before a lover can see so much as his mistress's face : all this while the authors are forced to entertain the readers with these tedious preliminaries : now it being impossible to vary the incidents, recourse is had to an artifice, or remedy still worse than the distemper ; namely, prodigies : I am well assured you will not approve of an enchantress conjuring up an army out of the bowels of the earth ; or that one single hero should destroy another army consisting of an hundred thousand men : yet these are our romances : these insipid and reiterated adventures make us dull, and these extravagant prodigies are perfectly shocking.

Paris, 6th of the Moon,

Chalval, 1719.

LETTER CXXXV.

RICA to IBBEN, at Smyrna.

THE ministers succeed each other, and drive one another out like the seasons. Within these three years have I seen four several changes in the system of the finances. In Persia and in Turkey the subsidies are to this day levied in the same manner as the founders of those monarchies used to levy them : it is far from being so here. It is true, we do not use so much art in this affair as the Europeans : we are of opinion, that the difference between administering the revenues of a prince, and those of a private man, is no more than there is between reckoning up a hundred thousand tomans, or a bare hundred. But in this country there is a great deal more of *finesse* and mystery. Great geniuses must work night and day, and be incessantly conceiving, and bringing forth with pain new projects ; must hearken to the advices of multitudes of people that work for them without being desired, must withdraw, and lock themselves up in a closet impenetrable to the great, and revered by the little ; must always have their heads filled with important secrets, miraculous plans, new schemes, and swallowed up in meditation, must not only be deprived of the use of speech, but even sometimes of good manners.

As soon as the late king's eyes were closed, a new administration was to be established ; affairs were visibly in a bad condition ; but how to make them better was a task they knew not how to go about : people were displeased at the unlimited authority of the preceding ministers, a resolution was therefore taken to divide that authority : to this purpose six or seven

councils were created : and this ministry so divided is perhaps that which of all others has governed France in the most rational manner. Its duration was short, as well as that of the benefits it produced.

France, at the death of the late king was a body labouring under a thousand distempers : M * * * ^{LAW} took her cure in hand, cut away the superfluous flesh, and applied some topical remedies : but still there remained an interior malady. * A foreigner came and undertook the cure : after using a great many violent medicines, he thought he had restored her to a good plight ; but it was false fat : he only bloated her.

They, that were rich men six months ago, are now fallen into poverty ; and such as had not bread to eat, now wallow in riches. Never were these two extremes so contiguous before. This foreigner has turned the state, as a taylor turns an old coat ; what was undermost he made uppermost, and what was uppermost he puts undermost. The unexpected fortunes that have been made ! incredible even to those that possess them ! The Almighty did not with more rapidity create men out of nothing. How many footmen are now served by their fellow-servants, and perhaps to-morrow by their masters !

This oftentimes occasions odd accidents. Footmen that had made their fortunes in the last reign now brag of their birth : they bestow upon those that have just left their livery in a certain † street, the same contempt themselves were in, six months before ; they make a noise, that gentility is utterly

M 3

* Mr. Law afore-mentioned.

† Quincompoix street, the stock-jobbers rendezvous in the Mississipi year.

undone ! and there is nothing but confusion in the state ! all distinction at an end ! no respect paid to men of rank ! none but upstarts to be seen ! sprung up in a night like mushrooms ! I doubt not but these latter will take their full revenge upon those that come after them ; and that in thirty years time these men of quality will make no little noise.

Paris, the 1st of the Moon
Zilcada, 1719.

LETTER CXXXVI.

RICA to the same.

B E H O L D a great example of conjugal love, not only in a woman, but in a queen. The queen of Sweden being resolved to make the prince her husband a partner in the throne, in order to remove all difficulties, has sent to the states a declaration, whereby she desists from all pretensions to the regency, provided they will elect him their king.

Sixty years ago, or thereabouts, another queen, whose name was Christina, abdicated the crown, that so she might entirely give herself up to philosophy. I know not which of these two examples we are to admire most.

Though I am sufficiently satisfied that every individual ought to stick to the station where nature has placed him ; and can by no means commend the weakness of such as, finding themselves reduced, quit their posts by a kind of desertion ; yet am I wonderfully pleased with the greatness of soul of these two princesses ; and to see the mind of the one, and the heart of the other so much superior to their fortune. Christina applied herself to speculation, at a time

when others think of nothing but pleasure : and the other thinks no pleasure equal to that of placing her whole happiness in the hands of her august spouse.

Paris, 27th of the Moon
Maharram, 1720.

LETTER CXXXVII.

RICA to USBEK.

THE parliament of Paris is just now banished to a little town called Pontoise. The council have sent to them, to register or approve a declaration which dishonours them ; and they have registered it in such a manner as dishonours the council.

Some other parliaments of the kingdom are threatened with the like treatment.

Parliaments are always odious : they never approach kings, but to tell them disagreeable truths : and whilst a crowd of courtiers are continually representing to them a people happy under their government ; these come and contradict the flattery, and throw at the foot of the throne the groans and tears committed to their charge.

It is a heavy burden, my dear Usbek, that of truth, when it must be carried up to princes : who ought to consider, that they who do it are constrained thereto ; and that they would never be prevailed upon to do a thing so melancholy, and so afflictiong to those who do it, were they not obliged to it by their duty, their respect, and even their love.

Paris, the 21st of the Moon
Gemmadi 1st, 1719.

LETTER CXXXVIII.

RICA to USBEK.

TOWARD the end of the week I will come and see thee. O how agreeably will the hours slide away in thy conversation !

Not long ago I was introduced to a court-lady, who had a mind to see my outlandish figure. I found her beautiful, worthy of the regards of our monarch, and of holding an august rank in the sacred place where his heart reposeth.

She asked me a thousand questions about Persia, and what manner of life the Persian women led : I found that the seraglio was not what she liked, and that she disapproved of one man's being divided between ten or twelve women. She could not, without envy, behold the happiness of the one, nor without pity the condition of the others. As she loved reading, especially the poets and romances, she desired me to give her some account of ours : what I said of them redoubled her curiosity : she begged I would translate for her a fragment of some of those which I had brought along with me. I did so, and some days after sent her a Persian tale : perhaps thou wilt not be displeased to see it in this disguise.

In the days of Cheik-Ali-Can, there lived a woman in Persia, whose name was Zulema ; she could repeat the whole Alcoran from one end to the other : there was not a Dervise that better understood the traditions of the holy prophets : there was nothing so mysterious in the Arabian doctors, which she did not fully comprehend the meaning of : and to this knowledge was added a sprightliness of wit, which

made it difficult to guess whether she meant to amuse or instruct those she conversed with.

One day being with her companions, in an apartment of the seraglio ; one of them asked her what she thought of a future state ? and whether she believed that antient tradition of our doctors, ‘ That paradise is for none but men.’

It is the vulgar opinion, says she to them ; there has been no stone unturned to degrade our sex : nay, there is a nation, scattered throughout all Persia, called the Jewish nation, who assert, from the authority of their sacred books, ‘ That we women have no souls.’

These injurious opinions have no other foundation, but the pride of the men, who are extending their superiority, even beyond the limits of life ; never considering, that, in the great day, all creatures shall appear before God, and seem as nothing : nor will there be among them any other distinction or prerogative, but what shall arise from virtue.

God will not be limited in his rewards : and as the men that have lived well, and have made right use of the power they have over us here below, will in paradise be replenished with celestial and ravishing beauties, and such as if a mortal had beheld them, he would have given himself immediate death to come at them : so in like manner shall virtuous women go into a place of delights, where they shall be inebriated with full draughts of pleasure, in company of those divine men, who shall be subjected unto them : each woman shall have a seraglio, wherein the men shall be shut up, and eunuchs far more trusty than ours to look after them.

I have read, added she, in an Arabian book, of a certain man named Ibrahim, who was insupportably jealous : he had twelve wives, all exceeding beauti-

ful, whom he used after a very severe manner : he trusted neither his eunuchs nor the walls of his seraglio ; he almost always kept them under lock and key in their chamber, where they could neither see nor speak to one another ; for he was even jealous of an innocent friendship : all his actions had a taint of his natural brutality : no kind word ever issued out of his mouth ; and never did he make the least sign with his hand, or the least nod with his head, which did not add something to the rigour of their slavery.

One day, that they were all together in the hall of the seraglio, one of them, bolder than the rest, upbraided him for his ill nature. Says she to him, when people study so much to make themselves dreaded, it is a sure sign they have done something for which they know they are hated ; we live so very unhappy, that we cannot help desiring a change. Others, in my place, could wish your death ; I only wish my own ; and it cannot happen sooner than I desire it, since it is the only means of being separated from you. This speech, which ought to have softened him, put him into a violent rage ; he drew his dagger, and buried it in her bosom. My dear companions, said she with a dying voice, if heaven has pity of my virtue, you will be revenged : saying thus, she left this worthless world, to go to the mansions of delight, where such women as have past a well-spent life enjoy a bliss which is continually renewing.

The first thing she saw was a smiling meadow, whose verdure was enameled with a variety of the gayest and most fragrant flowers : a brook, whose stream, more transparent than crystal, made an infinite number of turnings and windings : afterwards she entered into those charming bowers, whose silence

was only interrupted with the melodious warbling of birds : then spacious gardens presented themselves to her view : nature had adorned them with her simplicity, and the utmost magnificence : then she proceeded to a stately palace prepared for her, crowded with heavenly men, that were destined for her delight.

Two of these immediately began to undress her : others put her into the bath, and perfumed her all over with the most delicious essences : then they presented her with a habit infinitely richer than her own : afterwards they led her into a spacious hall, where she found a fire made with aromatic woods, and a table spread with the most exquisite dainties. Every thing seemed to conspire to transport her senses : on the other hand was heard music, so much the more divine, as it was soft : on the other, she beheld nothing but the dances of those divine men, whose sole business was to pleasure her. Yet, as those pleasures were only in order to lead her insensibly to others far greater, she was conducted into a chamber, and after once more unclothing her, was laid on a rich bed, where two men, inexpressibly handsome, received her in their arms. Here she was intoxicated, and her ecstasies exceeded even her desires. I am quite besides myself, says she to them ; I believe I should die, were I not assured of my immortality : it is too much ; let me go ; I am convulsed with the violent delight. So ; it is done ; you now restore a little calm to my senses ; I begin to breathe, and come again to myself why have they taken away the lights ? why may I not now survey your divine beauty ? Why may I not see . . . but to what purpose ? You again throw me back into my first transports. O ye Gods, how amiable is this darkness ! what, shall I be immortal ? and with you too !

Shall . . . no . . . I ask your pardon, gentlemen ;
for I plainly see you will not ask mine.

After many reiterated commands, she was obeyed : but not till she was seriously resolved so to be : she repos'd herself in a languishing manner, and slumbered in their arms. Two moments rest repaired her faintness : she received two kisses, which of a sudden re-inflamed her, and caused her to open her eyes. I am uneasy, says she ; I am afraid you cease to love me. This was a doubt wherein she resolved not long to continue : whereupon they gave her all the satisfaction she could wish : I am undeceived, said she ; I cry ye mercy : I can depend upon you : you speak not one word to me ; but your actions I like better than any thing you could say. Yes, yes, I frankly own, never was love like yours : but how ! you both contend for the honour of persuading me ? ah ! if you thus contend, if you join ambition to the pleasure of my overthrow, I am undone : you will both remain conquerors, and only I be conquered : but you shall purchase the victory very dear.

This scene was interrupted by nothing but the daylight : her faithful lovely domestics came into her chamber, and raised these two young men, who were led by two old ones to the respective places where they were kept for pleasure. She afterwards got up, and at first shew'd herself to that idolatrous court, in all the charms of a plain undress, and afterwards clothed in the most sumptuous ornaments. This night had embellished, and, as it were, burnish'd her beauty : it had given life to her complexion, and energy to her graces. All the day was spent in dances, consorts, banquets, sportings, and the like : and it was observed, that Anäis stole away from time to time, and flew to her two young heroes ; after some precious moments of converse, she returned to the

company she had quitted, always with a serener countenance than before. To cut short, towards the evening they lost her for good and all ; she went and shut herself up in the seraglio, whether she told them she would go and contract acquaintance with those immortal captives, who were to live for ever with her ; she therefore visited the most retired, and the most charming apartments of the place, where she reckoned up fifty slaves miraculously beautiful : she strayed all night from chamber to chamber, every where receiving their homage, always different, and always the same.

Thus you see how the immortal Anäis passed her life ; sometimes amidst the splendid pleasures, sometimes amidst the solitary ; either admired by a shining company, or else caressed by a lover distractedly fond of her : oftentimes she would forsake the enchanted palace, and remove into a Sylvan grotto : the flowers seemed to grow from every step she took ; and the Loves and Sports presented themselves in crowds to meet her on the way. More than eight days she continued in this happy abode ; and all that while, being continually beside herself, she had not made the least reflexion : she had enjoyed her happiness without knowing it, or without having had so much as one of those quiet moments wherein the soul does, as it were, call herself to account, and gives itself audience amidst the silence of the passions.

The blest have pleasures so strong, that they rarely can enjoy this liberty of the mind : hence it is, that being irreclaimably attached to present objects, they intirely lose the memory of things past ; and retain no longer any regard to what they knew or loved in the other world.

But Anäis, whose mind was truly philosophical,

had passed almost her whole life in meditation : she had carried her reflections much further, than one would have expected from a woman left to herself. The austere retreat which her husband had confined her to, had procured her no other advantage but this : it was this force and strength of mind, which had made her slight the fear her companions were struck with ; and despise death, which was to end her sufferings, and begin her felicity.

Thus, by little and little, she waded out of the ebriety of pleasure, and locked herself up, alone, in an apartment of her palace. She gave a loose to pleasing reflections upon her past condition and her present happiness : she could not forbear pitying the misfortune of her companions : it is natural to compassionate the pains we ourselves have passed through. Anäis kepted not within the bare bounds of compassion ; being moved with tenderness towards those unhappy creatures, she found herself inclined to relieve them.

She ordered one of those young men that were about her, to assume the shape of her husband ; she bad him go to the seraglio, seize it, turn him out of it, and continue there in his place till such time as she recalled him.

The execution was speedy ; he cut the air ; arrived at the gate of the seraglio, but Ibrahim was not there. He knocks ; the doors fly open ; the Eunuchs prostrate themselves at his feet : he hurries to the apartments where Ibrahim's women were shut up : he had before taken the keys out of the pocket of that jealous-pated wretch, to whom he had made himself invisible. He goes in ; he much surprizes them with his courteous and affable air, and yet more with his fondness, and the rapidity of his caresses : they were all equally astonished at his per-

formances, and would have taken it for a dream, had there been less of reality in it.

Whilst these news scenes were playing in the seraglio ; Ibrahim knocks, names himself to them, storms and makes a clamour : after he had gone through a world of difficulties, he enters, and puts the eunuchs into a terrible disorder : he fetches large strides : but starts back, and falls as from the clouds when he sees the false Ibrahim, his real image, enjoying all the liberties of a master. He calls out for help : he bids the eunuchs assist him in killing that impostor ; but he is not obeyed : there is nothing now remains but one remedy, and that a very poor one, which is, to refer it to the judgement of his women.

In the space of an hour, the false Ibrahim had corrupted all his judges : the other is driven away, and ignominiously dragged out of the seraglio ; and had received a thousand deaths, had not his rival ordered his life to be spared ; at length the new Ibrahim remaining master of the field of battle, shewed himself more and more worthy of the choice they had made, and signalized himself by miracles till then unknown. You are not like Ibrahim, said the women : that impostor is not like me, you mean, cries the triumphant Ibrahim. What must a man do to prove himself your spouse, if what I do suffices not ?

Far be it from us to doubt it, say the women. If you are not Ibrahim, we are satisfied you have well deserved to be him : you are more our spouse in one day, than he has been in the course of ten years. Then you will give me your word, cried he, that you will declare yourselves in my favour, against that impostor. We do, we do, said they, with one voice ; we will take an oath of everlasting fidelity to you : we have been but too long abused : the old

rogue did not at all suspect our virtue ; he only suspected his own inability ; we plainly see, that men are other-gues creatures than he : no, no, it is you they are like : O, could you but know how much you make us hate him ! — Well, I will give you cause more and more to hate him, replied the false Ibrahim : you do not yet know how much he has wronged you. We judge of his injustice by the greatness of our revenge, cried they. Yes, says the divine man, you are in the right ; I proportioned the expiation to the crime ; I am mighty glad my way of punishing has pleased you. But, said they, suppose this imposture should return, what shall we do then ? I believe, answered he, it would be a hard matter for him to deceive you in the part I have acted : it is a place hardly to be supplied by artifice ; and, besides, I will send him packing so far, you shall never more hear of him : then will I take your happiness into my care ; you shall not find me jealous, I shall know how to be secure of you without confining you ; I have too good an opinion of my own merit, to think you will prove false to me : if you are not virtuous with me, with whom will you be so ? This conversation lasted some time between him and those women, who, being more pleased with the difference of the two Ibrahims than their resemblance, did not concern themselves so much about having these mysteries cleared up to them. At length the husband, at his wit's end, returns once more upon them, to interrupt their pleasures : he found the whole house swimming with joy, and the women more incredulous than ever. It was no place for a jealous man : out he goes in a rage, and a moment after the false Ibrahim follows him, lays hold on him, transports him through the air, and leaves him four hundred leagues from the place.

O gods, in what affliction were these women by the absence of their dear Ibrahim ! Already had their eunuchs reassumed their natural severity : the whole house was in tears : sometimes they imagined, all that had happened to them was nothing but a dream : they looked at each other, and recalled to mind the minutest circumstances of these wonderful adventures. At last Ibrahim returns to them more amiable than before : it seemed to them as if his voyage had not been in the least laborious : the new master behaved so different from the other, he surprised the whole neighbourhood. He turned away all his eunuchs ; made his house free to every body ; he would not suffer his women so much as to be veiled ; it was a thing entirely new to see them at public entertainments amongst the men, and as free as they. Ibrahim believed, with reason, that the customs of the country were not for such citizens as he. Mean while he spared for no expence, he made the estate fly ; insomuch that the jealous Ibrahim returning three years afterwards from foreign countries, whither he had been carried, found nothing left but his wives, and six and thirty children.

Paris, the 26th of the Moon

Gemmadi 1st, 1720.

L E T T E R CXXXIX.

RICA to USBEK.

I NCLUSED is a letter I received yesterday from a virtuoso : it will appear to thee to be a pretty odd one.

SIR;

• Six months ago I took possession of an estate,
 • which an uncle of mine, a very rich man, left me :
 • No less than five hundred thousand livres, and a
 • house gloriously furnished. There is a pleasure
 • in having an estate when a man knows to make a
 • right use of it ! I am without ambition ; nor have I
 • a taste for pleasure : I am almost continually lock-
 • ed up in a closet, where I live the life of a virtuo-
 • so; here you may find a curious lover of venerable
 • antiquity.

• When my uncle had breathed his last, I would
 • have interred him according to the ceremonies ob-
 • served by the antient Greeks and Romans ; but
 • at that time I had no lachrymatories, no urns, no
 • antic lamps.

• But I have since fully furnished myself with those
 • valuable rarities : a few days ago I sold a whole
 • cupboard of plate, to purchase an earthen lamp
 • that belonged to a Stoic philosopher. I parted
 • with all the pier-glasses and sconces, with which
 • almost all the walls of my uncle's apartments were
 • covered, in exchange for a small pocket looking-
 • glass, somewhat cracked, which Virgil heretofore
 • made use of : I am charmed when I behold my
 • own figure represented, instead of that of the
 • Mantuan swan. More than this : I have pur-
 • chased for a hundred luis-d'ors five or six pieces
 • of copper-money that were current two thousand
 • years ago : I do not know at present that I have
 • in my whole house so much as one moveable, but
 • what was made before the declension of the em-
 • pire. I have a casket of invaluable manuscripts :
 • though I almost strain my eyes out of my head to
 • read them, I had much rather peruse them than the

printed copies, which are not so correct, and
which every body is possessed of. Though I ne-
ver stir abroad, yet have I a most inordinate pas-
sion to know the Roman high-ways. There is a
causey not far from me, that was made about
twelve hundred years ago by a proconsul of Gaul :
whenever I go to my country house, I never fail
to go that way, though it is three miles about,
and very rugged : but what makes me mad is,
that they have put up wooden posts from place to
place, to mark out the distance of the neighbour-
ing towns : I am out of my wits, to see such wretch-
ed indices, instead of military columns, which stood
there in antient times : I know not but I may
cause them to be replaced by my heirs, and engage
them to do it when I come to make my will. If
you have, Sir, such a thing as a Persian manu-
script, you will do me a singular pleasure to ac-
commodate me with it : you shall have what price
you please to put upon it ; I will present you, in-
to the bargain, with some of my own performan-
ces, whereby you will see I am no useless member
of the republic of letters : you will there find, a-
mong other things, a dissertation, wherein I prove,
that the crown which used to be worn in triumphs,
was of oak-leaves, nor laurel. You will likewise
admire another, wherein I prove, by learned con-
jectures drawn from the gravest Greek authors,
that Cambyses was wounded in the left leg, not
the right : another, wherein I prove, that a low
forehead was esteemed a singular beauty among
the Romans. I will likewise send you a volume
in quarto, by way of explication of one verse of
the sixth book of Virgil's Æneids : all these you
cannot have yet : so, at present, I shall only send
you a fragment of an antient Greek mythologist,

‘ which, never to this day, was made public ; and
 ‘ which I found among the rubbish of a certain li-
 ‘ brary. I am called away upon an important busi-
 ‘ ness which a have upon my hands. It is to restore
 ‘ a fine passage of Pliny the naturalist, which the
 ‘ transcribers of the fifth age have monstrously disfi-
 ‘ gured.

I am, etc.

FRAGMENT of an antient MYTHOLOGIST.

‘ IN an island near the Orcades, there was born a
 ‘ male-child, who had to his father Æolus, a god of
 ‘ the winds ; and, for his mother, a nymph of Ca-
 ‘ ledonia. It is said that he learned of himself to
 ‘ count with his fingers ; and when he was but four
 ‘ years old would so perfectly distinguish metals, that
 ‘ his mother one day giving him a brass ring in-
 ‘ stead of a gold one *, he discovered the cheat, and
 ‘ threw it away.

‘ When he was grown up, his father taught him
 ‘ the secret of inclosing the winds in a leatheren bot-
 ‘ tle, which he afterwards sold to seamen and others
 ‘ that had occasion for them : but this being a com-
 ‘ modity not much esteemed in his country, he quit-
 ‘ ted it, and went and roamed about the world in
 ‘ company with the blind god † of chance.

‘ He was informed in his travels, that Boetica was
 ‘ a country full of gold : this made him hasten thither
 ‘ as fast as he could. He met with a very cold
 ‘ reception from ‡ Saturn then reigning : but that
 ‘ god forsaking the earth, he took it in his head to
 ‘ go into all the cross ways, where he never ceased

* Mr. Law, who is alluded to in this satire, was a gold-smith in Edinburgh.

† Mr. Law was a proffessed gamester many years.

‡ Louis XIV.

bawling out in a hoarse, deep-mouthed bass ; People of Boetica, you fancy yourselves to be rich, because you have gold and silver : I pity your misfortune : be ruled by me ; quit the vile dross, and come into the empire of imagination, where you shall meet with riches that will surprise even you. And then he opened a good many of his leather bottles, and distributed his merchandise to as many as desired it.

Next day he returned again to the same place, and roared out : People of Boetica, have you a mind to be rich ? do but fancy me to be so, and that you are so too : only take it into your heads every morning, that your fortune was doubled during the night ; then get out of your beds, and if you have any creditors, go and pay them with this imaginary coin, and bid them go and set their imaginations at work, as you have done.

Some days afterwards he comes again, and thus accouls them ; People of Boetica, I find your imagination is not so strong as it was at first : let mine be your guide : I will every morning set before your eyes a scroll that shall be to you a spring of wealth : it consists but of four words ; but they shall be to the purpose ; for they shall regulate your daughters portions, your sons fortunes, the number of your domestics ; and, as for you, says he to those that were nearell to him ; as for you, my dear children, I may call you by that name, for you owe to me a second birth ; my scroll will determine the magnificenc of your equipages, the sumptuosity of your public entertainments, the number and stipends of your respective mistresses.

Some days after this he comes to the same place again, and quite out of breath, and in a transport of

' passion cried out : People of Boetica, I before
 ' counselled you to imagine, and you would not ;
 ' I now command you to do it. Here he left them
 ' abruptly ; but, upon second thoughts, returned a-
 ' gain : I understand that some among you are so
 ' detestable as to preserve your gold and silver ; as
 ' for the silver, no matter ; but for the gold — the
 ' gold — ah ! it is that raises my indignation —
 ' I swear by these sacred bottles, that if they do not
 ' come and bring it me, I will severely punish them :
 ' then he added, with an air perfectly persuasive,
 ' Do you think it is to keep these vile metals, that
 ' I ask them of you ? No ; and, for a mark of my
 ' sincerity, when you brought them to me the other
 ' day, did I not immediately return you one half of
 ' them ?

' Next day he was discovered at a distance, insi-
 ' nuating himself with a smooth and flattering
 ' speech : People of Boetica, I am informed that
 ' part of your effects is in foreign countries : pray
 ' send for them ; I beg you would bring them to
 ' me, and I shall be for ever thankful to you for the
 ' favour.

' The son of Æolus talked to people, who had no
 ' great stomach to laugh, and yet they could not for-
 ' bear it ; which confounded him not a little : but
 ' again taking heart, he ventured one more small
 ' petition. I know that you have jewels : In the
 ' name of Jupiter, away with those jewels ; nothing
 ' is more impoverishing than such trash ; away
 ' with them, I say ; delay not a moment to part
 ' with them ; if you cannot do it yourselves, I will
 ' help you to men of understanding that shall do it
 ' for you : oh ! what floods of wealth will come
 ' pouring in upon you, if you but take my advice :
 ' yes, I promise you, and you may depend upon it,

the purest, the most refined treasure in all these bottles shall be yours.

At last he got upon a joint-stool, and with a more assured voice he tells them : People of Boetica, I have compared the happy condition you are now in with that in which I found you when I came hither : you are now the richest people on the face of the earth : but, to complete your fortune, permit me to take from you a moiety of your estates. At these words suddenly the son of Æolus flew away, and left his auditors in an inexpressible consternation ; which made him return again the next day, and thus he spoke : I yesterday perceived that my discourse pleased you not a little. Well, let that go for nothing : it is true, a moiety is too much : other expedients must be found out to compass the drift of my designs : let us bring all our riches to one and the same place : this we may easily do ; they are not very bulky : and immediately three fourths of them vanished quite out of sight.'

Paris, the 9th of the Moon
Chahban, 1720.

LETTER CXL.

RICA to NATHANIEL LEVI, a Jew physician, at Leghorn.

THOU askest me what I think of all the virtue of Amulets, and of the power of Talismans. Why dost thou enquire of me ? Thou art a Jew, and I a Mahometan ; that is, we are both of us not a little credulous.

I always bear about me more than two thousand passages of the holy Alcoran ; round each of my arms is fastened a small packet, wherein are written the names of above two hundred Dervises ; those of Ali, Fatima, and all the pure ones, are concealed in above twenty places of my clothes.

And yet, I have never the worse opinion of those, who deny the virtue that we attribute to certain words : it is a much harder task for us to answer their arguments, than it is for them to answer our experiments. I wear about me these sacred relics for custom-sake, and to conform to the general practice : I believe that if they have no more virtue in them than the rings and other ornaments we wear for show, so neither have they less ; but thou putteth thy whole confidence in certain mysterious letters ; and without this safeguard thou wouldest be in continual apprehension.

Men are very unhappy : they do nothing but fluctuate between false hopes and ridiculous fears : and, instead of resting upon reason, they create to themselves monsters that scare them, or phantoms that mislead them.

What effect wouldest thou have the marshalling of certain letters to produce ? and what effect dost thou expect from putting the same out of order ? What relation do they bear to the winds, that they should lay a storm ? what to gunpowder, to damp the force thereof ? What relation have they to what the physicians call the peccant humour and the morbid internal cause of maladies, in order to their cure ?

The cream of the jest is, that those very people who fatigue their reason to find a relation between certain events and occult virtues, have no lets difficulty to hinder themselves from seeing the true cause thereof.

Thou wilt tell me that sorcery has occasioned the winning of a battle : and I tell thee, that thou must wink very hard, not to find in the situation of the ground, in the number or courage of the soldiers, in the experience of the captains, sufficient causes for producing that effect, of which thou art resolved not to see the cause.

I will suppose, for once, there is such a thing as witchcraft : and do you in your turn, for once, suppose there is no such thing : for that is not impossible : this concession which thou makest me, hinders not two armies from fighting : wilt thou in that case have it, that neither of these two can win the victory ? Dost thou believe that their fate will remain uncertain, till some invisible power comes to determine it ? that every shot shall be lost, all prudence ineffectual, and all courage unserviceable ?

Thinkest thou that death, in so many hideous shapes, cannot produce in the minds of men those panic terrors which thou art at such a loss to account for ? Wilt thou have it, that in an army of an hundred thousand men, there cannot possibly be one coward ? Thinkest thou that this man's heart misgiving him may not produce the like in another ; and that the second deserting a third, may not soon occasion him to abandon a fourth ? There needs no more than this, and despair of conquering shall seize at once a whole army ; and the more numerous it is, so much the easier may this happen.

Every body knows, and every body feels, that men, like all other creatures which tend to preserve their being, are passionately fond of life. This is notorious in general : and shall we inquire wherefore, upon a particular occasion, they are afraid of losing it ?

Though the sacred books of nations are filled with those panic or supernatural terrors, I do not think there is any thing so trifling : because before we can be assured that an effect, which may be produced by a hundred thousand natural causes, is supernatural, we must find out whether any of those causes omitted to act ; which it is impossible to do.

I shall say no more to thee, Nathaniel, but only that in my opinion the subject does not deserve to be so seriously handled.

Paris, 20th of the Moon

Chahban, 1720.

P. S. ‘ As I was concluding, I heard them cry in
 ‘ the street, A letter from a country physician to a
 ‘ physician at Paris ; (for here all manner of trash is
 ‘ printed, published, and bought up). I thought I
 ‘ should do well to send it thee, because it has some
 ‘ relation to our subject : there are a great many
 ‘ things in it which I do not understand ; but thou,
 ‘ who art a physician, must needs understand the
 ‘ language of the fraternity.

LETTER from a PHYSICIAN in the Country,
 to a PHYSICIAN at Paris.

‘ THERE was a sick man in our town that could
 ‘ get no sleep for five and thirty days together : his
 ‘ physician ordered him opium, but he could not be
 ‘ prevailed upon to take it ; once he had the cup at
 ‘ his mouth, and then he was more irresolute than
 ‘ ever : at last he says to his physician, Sir, I beg
 ‘ quarter only till to-morrow morning : I know a
 ‘ man that never practises physic, but who has a

multitude of medicines for such as cannot sleep ;
give me leave to send for him : and if I do not
sleep to night, I promise to go on with you. The
physician being dismissed, the patient caused the
curtains to be drawn close, and bid his foot-boy
go and fetch Mr. Anis to him. Mr. Anis comes :
Dear Mr. Anis, I am a dead man ; I cannot get
a wink of sleep : have not you in your shop such
a thing as the C. of G, or else some book of de-
votion composed by the reverend father of the so-
ciety of Jesus, that you have not been able to get
rid of ? for sometimes those medicines are best
that have been longest kept. Sir, says the book-
seller, I have father Causin's HOLY COURT, in
six volumes, at your service ; I will go and fetch
them you : I hope they will do you good. If you
would have the works of the reverend father Ro-
drigues the Spanish Jesuit, you are welcome to
them ; but, take my word for it, you had better
stick to father Causin ; and I hope, with God's
blessing, one period of father Causin will operate
as much as the whole leaf of the C. of G. Upon
this Mr. Anis runs and fetches the medicine out
of his shop. The HOLY COURT arrives ; the dust
is wiped off : the sick man's son, a young school-
boy, began to read in it ; he was the first it had an
effect upon : at the second page his tongue began
to faulter ; and now the whole company felt them-
selves sinking away ; the moment afterwards they
all fell a snoring, except the sick man ; who, after
he had held out a long time, at last fell into a
doze.

Early in the morning the physician comes :
well, has he taken my opium ? no answer is made
him : the wife, the daughter, the young lad, all o-

‘ verjoyed, point to father Causin : he asked what
 ‘ it was : they answer, God’s blessing on father
 ‘ Causin, he shall be sent to the bindet’s : who
 ‘ would have thought this ? A miracle ! a miracle !
 ‘ See there, Sir, see father Causin ; it was he pro-
 ‘ cured my father this blessed nap. And so they up
 ‘ and told the whole thing to him, just as it
 ‘ happened.

‘ The physician was a deep scholar : replete with
 ‘ the mysteries of the Cabala, and the power of
 ‘ words and spirits. This accident set his thoughts
 ‘ at work : after a little musing, he resolved abso-
 ‘ lutely to alter his method. Here is a very extra-
 ‘ ordinary cure, says he to himself ; here is an ex-
 ‘ periment before my face ; it must be pushed on
 ‘ further : why may not a man’s spirit transfer upon
 ‘ the product of his brain the same qualities it has in
 ‘ itself ? is it not done every day ? at least it is
 ‘ worth while to try : I am tired out with the apo-
 ‘ thecaries : the syrups, their julips, and all the
 ‘ Galenical drugs, are ruinous both to the patient’s
 ‘ health and pocket. I will take another course ; I
 ‘ will try the virtue of spirits. Upon this idea he
 ‘ drew up a new pharmacy, as you will see by the
 ‘ description I am going to give you of the principal
 ‘ recipes he prescribes.

A Purgative Ptisane.

‘ Take three leaves of Aristotle’s logic in Greek ;
 ‘ two leaves of some tract of scholastic theology,
 ‘ the sharpest you can get, for example, the subtle
 ‘ Scotus ; four of Paracelsus ; one of Avicenna ; six
 ‘ of Averroes ; three of Porphyry ; as many of
 ‘ Plotinus ; as many of Janiblicus ; infuse the

whole twenty-four hours ; and take of it four times a-day.

A stronger Purge.

Take ten A *** of C *** concerning the B ** and the C ** of the I ** ; distill them in Balneo Mariae, mortify a drop of the acrid and sharp humour which proceeds from it, in a glass of common water, and swallow the whole down at once.

A Vomitive.

Take six harangues, twelve funeral orations indifferently, carefully observing however not to take those of Mr. D. N ; a collection of new operas, fifty romances, thirty new memoirs : put the whole into a long narrow-necked round bellied bottle ; let it digest two days ; then distill them in hot sand : and if this will not do it,

Another, stronger.

Take a leaf of marble paper, which has served for a cover to the collection of J. F's. pieces : infuse it the space of three months, warm a spoonful of this infusion, and swallow it.

A very simple remedy against an Asthma.

Read all the works of the reverend father Maimbourg, a quondam Jesuite ; beware you stop not till you come to the end of a period, and you will

- ‘ find a gradual return of the faculty of breathing,
- ‘ without needing to repeat the remedy.

Against the Itch, Scurf, Scald-heads, Farcy in Horses.

‘ Take three of Aristotle’s categories ; two meta-
 ‘ physical degrees, one distinction, six of Chapelain’s
 ‘ verses, one phrase out of the letters of the abbot
 ‘ de St. Cyran ; write the whole upon a piece of pa-
 ‘ per, then fold it up, fasten it to a ribbon, and wear
 ‘ it about his neck.

*Miraculum Chymicum de violenta Fermentatione cum
 Famo, Igne, et Flamma.*

‘ Misce Quiesnelliānam infusionem, cum infusione
 ‘ Lall̄maniana : fiat fermentatio cum magna vi,
 ‘ impetu, et tonitru, acidis pugnantibus, et invicem
 ‘ penetrantibus alcalinos sales : fiet evaporatio ar-
 ‘ dentium spirituum : pone liquorem fermentatum
 ‘ in alembico : nihil inde extrahes, et nihil inve-
 ‘ nies, nisi caput mortuum.

Lenitivum.

‘ Recipe Molinae Anodynī chartas duas ; Esco-
 ‘ baris relaxativi paginas sex ; Vasquii emollientis
 ‘ felium unum : infunde in aquae communis lb.
 ‘ iiiiij. ad consumptionem dimidiae partis ; colentur
 ‘ et exprimantur ; et in expressione dissolve Bauni
 ‘ detersivi, et Tamburini abluentis folia iii. Fiat
 ‘ Clyster.

In Chlorosim, quam vulgos pallidos colores, aut febrim amatoriam appellat.

‘ Recipe Aretini figuras quatuor ; R. Thomae Sanchii de Matrimonio folia ii. infundantur in aquae communis libras quinque.

‘ Fiat Ptisana aperiens.’

These are the drugs, which our physician administered with a success not to be imagined. He was against the use of your rare and uncommon medicines, and such as are scarce any where to be met with, because he would not ruin his patients ; as for example, an epistle dedicatory that never made any body yawn ; a preface, too short ; a pastoral letter written by a bishop ; and the work of a Jansenist, despised by a Jansenist, or else admired by a Jesuit. He used to say, such sort of remedies are only fit to support quackery, to which he had an unsurmountable antipathy.

L E T T E R CXLI.

USBEK to RHEDI, at Venice.

IT has been long ago said, that sincérité was the soul of a great minister.

A private man can enjoy obscurity wherever he is ; he only discredits himself with some few people ; he is concealed to others ; but a minister who wants probity, has as many witnesses, as many judges, as there are men under his government.

May I speak a bold word ? The greatest mischief done by a minister without probity, is not diserving his prince, and ruining his people : there is another

in my opinion a thousand times more dangerous; and that is, the ill example he sets.

Thou knowest that I travelled a long time in the Indies: I there saw a nation naturally generous, perverted in an instant from the lowest to the highest, purely by the bad example of a chief minister. I have seen a whole people, among whom generosity, probity, candor, sincerity, were always looked upon as inherent qualities, become at once the worst people in the world; the evil spreading itself, and not even the purest members escaping it: the most virtuous men doing the unworthiest actions; and violating on all occasions the first principles of justice, upon this frivolous pretence, that she was violated to their hands.

They called upon the most odious laws to warrant the basest actions; and gave injustice and treachery, the name of necessity.

I have seen the faith of contracts banished, the most sacred conventions annihilated, all the laws of families turned topsy-turvy. I have seen covetous debtors, proud of an insolent poverty, become the most scandalous instruments of the fury of the laws, and of the rigour of the times; pretending a payment, instead of making one, and cutting the very throats of their benefactors.

I have seen others still worse, buying up, almost for nothing, or rather picking up from the earth, oak leaves, to exchange them for the substance of the widows and orphans.

I have seen suddenly sprung up in every heart, an insatiable thirst after money. I have seen formed in a moment a cursed conspiracy to be rich; not by a commendable labour, and a generous industry, but by the ruin of the prince, the state, and fellow-citizens.

I have seen an honest citizen, in those unhappy times, never go to bed without saying, I have ruined one family to-day, and to-morrow I will ruin another.

I am going, said another, with a black man with an inkhorn in his hand, and a steel pen in his ear, to assassinate all those to whom I have any obligation.

Another said, I see I shall make up my matters : it is true, when I went three days ago to make a certain payment, I left a whole family in tears ; I consumed the portions of two deserving young ladies, and robbed a young lad of his education ; their father will die with grief, the mother has broke her heart : but I did no more than what the law allowed.

What greater crime can there be, than that which a minister commits, when he corrupts the manners of a whole nation, degrades the most generous souls, tarnishes the lustre of dignities, darkens even virtue itself, and confounds the most exalted birth in the universal contempt ?

What will posterity say, when she must blush for her forefathers ? what will the future people say, when they shall compare the iron of their ancestors, with the gold of those to whom they immediately owe the light ? I doubt not but the gentry will expunge out of their scutcheons those infamous quarterings which dishonour them, and will leave the present generation in the frightful nothingness whereto they have brought themselves.

Paris, 11th of the Moon

Rhamazan, 1740.

LETTER CXLII.

The CHIEF EUNUCH to USBEK.

THINGS are come to that pass here, there is no enduring it : thy wives fancied thy departure left them an entire impunity ; here are strange doings : I cannot forbear trembling myself at the recital of what I am about to tell thee.

Zelis going not long since to the mosque, let down her veil, and appeared almost bare-faced before the whole people.

I caught Zachi in bed with one of her female slaves ; a thing so severely forbid by the laws of the seraglio.

By the greatest chance in the world I came by a letter, which I send thee. I have not been able to find out who it was directed to.

Last night a young man was found in the garden of the seraglio, and he made his escape over the wall.

Add to this what has not as yet reached my certain knowledge ; for assuredly thou art betrayed. I wait thy orders ; and till the happy moment that I receive them, I shall be under terrible apprehensions : but if thou committest not all these women to my discretion, I will not answer for any one of them, and shall have every day as bad news as this to send thee.

From the seraglio of Ispahan, the 1st of the Moon Regeb, 1717.

LETTER CXLIII.

Usbek to the Chief Eunuch, at the seraglio of Ispahan.

RECEIVE with this letter an absolute power over the whole seraglio : command with the same authority as myself : let fear and terror accompany thy steps : run from one apartment to another, distributing chastisements and corrections : let every thing be brought under consternation : let all dissolve into tears before thee : interrogate the whole seraglio : begin with the slaves : spare not my own favourite : let nothing escape thy dreadful tribunal : bring to light the most hidden secrets : purify that infamous place, and recall exiled virtue : for from this moment be upon thy head the minutest faults that shall be committed : I suspect Zelis to be the person to whom that letter, which fell into your hands, was directed : fist into this affair with the eyes of a lynx.

From * * *, the 11th of the
Moon Zilhage, 1718.

LETTER CXLIV.

Narsit to Usbek, at Paris.

THE chief eunuch is newly dead, magnificent lord : as I am the eldest of thy slaves, I have taken his place, till thou shalt have signified upon whom thou pleasest to cast thy eye.

Two days after his death, a letter was brought me from thee, directed to him : I presumed not to open it : I respectfully put it into a cover : and have locked it up, until thou makest known thy sacred pleasure.

Yesterday a slave, in the dead of night, came and informed me, he had found a young man in the seraglio : I arose : I examined into the thing : and behold it was a vision.

I kiss thy feet, sublime lord ; and I beseech thee to rely on my zeal, my experience, and my advanced age.

From the seraglio of Ispahan,
the 5th of the Moon Gem-
madi 1st, 1718.

LETTER - CXLV.

USBEK, to NARSIT at the seraglio at Ispahan.

WRETCH, thou art in possession of letters, which enjoin a speedy and severe execution : the least delay may drive me to madness, and thou remainest calm beneath an idle pretext :

There are horrible doings : I know not but one half of my slaves deserve death : I send you the letter which the chief eunuch wrote to me thereupon, before he died : had you opened the pacquet directed to him, you had therein found fanguinary orders : read therefore those orders, and if you execute them not, you shall be cut off.

From * * *, 25th of the
Moon Chalval, 1718.

LETTER CXLVI.

SOLIM to USBEK, at Paris.

SHOULD I longer keep silence, I should be as guilty as those criminals thou hast in the seraglio.

I was the confident of the chief eunuch, the faithfuller of all thy slaves. When he saw himself drawing towards his end, he sent for me, and delivered himself in these words : I am a dying man ; and nothing troubles me, but that the last thing I beheld, was the disloyalty of my master's women : Heaven preserve him from the misfortunes I foresee ! and when I am dead, may my threatening ghost appear to those perfidious wretches, to remind them of their duty, and once again strike terror into them ! Here are the keys of this venerable place : go and carry them to the eldest of the black eunuchs ; but if, after my death, he fails in his duty, neglect not thou to advertise thy master of it. Saying these words, he expired in my arms.

What he wrote to thee some time before he died, concerning the behaviour of thy wives, I know not : there is in the seraglio a letter which would have carried terror along with it, had it been opened ; that which thou wrotest since, was intercepted three leagues from this place : I know not what to make of it : every thing falls out unluckily.

All this time thy wives observe no manner of decorum : since the death of the chief eunuch, they think they may do any thing : none but Roxana

continues dutiful, and preserves her modesty. The others grow worse and worse every day. We no longer behold upon the countenance of thy wives that masculine and severe virtue, which was wont to be so conspicuous in every feature: a new kind of pleasure and joyfulness that reigns among them, is, in my judgement, an infallible token of some new satisfaction. In the minutest things I observe a licentiousness till now unknown; there prevails among thy very slaves a certain indolence which surprises me: they no longer observe the rules of their duty: they have not that eagerness nor zeal for thy service, which formerly seemed to animate the whole seraglio.

Thy women have been eight days in the country, at one of thy privatest houses. The slave who hath the care thereof, is said to have been corrupted, and that, some time before thy wives arrived there, he had concealed two men in a hole within the walls of the principal chamber, from whence they came out in the night season, after we were retired: the old eunuch, who at present presides over us, is an infirm wretch, and believes every thing they say to him.

My choler boils at the thoughts of so much treachery: and if heaven so ordains it for thy advantage and better service, that I shall be thought capable of governing, I promise thee, and will undertake, that if thy women are not virtuous, they shall at least be loyal.

From the seraglio of Ispahan, the 6th of the Moon Rabiab, 1719.

LETTER CXLVII.

NARSIT to USBEK, at Paris.

ROXANA and Zelis desired to go into the country : I did not think fit to refuse them. Happy Usbek, thou hast faithful wives, and vigilant slaves : my lot is fallen to command in a place which virtue seems to have chosen for an asylum : depend upon it that nothing shall pass therein which thy own eyes could be offended at the sight of.

A misfortune has happened, which gives me no small disturbance. Some Armenian merchants newly arrived at Ispahan, were charged with a letter from thee to me : I sent a slave to fetch it : in his return he was robbed ; so that the letter is lost. Write therefore to me with speed : for, in the present circumstances of affairs, thou must needs have things of moment to communicate.

From the seraglio of Fatma,
the 6th of the Moon Re-
biab, 1719.

LETTER CXLVIII.

USBEK to SOLIM, at the seraglio of Ispahan.

IPut the sword into thy hand : I intrust thee with that which at present is the dearest thing to me in the world ; namely, my vengeance : enter upon

this new employ ; but I leave behind thee thy heart and thy humanity : I have written to my wives, to obey thee implicitly : in the confusion of so many crimes they shall fall down at the least glance of thy eye. I must owe to thee my happiness and my quiet : give me back my seraglio as I left it ; but let it be first expiated : root out the guilty, and make such tremble as would have been fo. What rewards mayest thou not expect from thy master, for such signal services ? It is thy own fault, if thou dost not only set thyself vastly above thy condition, but all recompences that ever entered into thy heart to conceive.

Paris, 4th of the Moon
Chahban, 1719.

LETTER CXLIX.

USBEK to his WIVES at the seraglio of Ispahan.

MA Y this letter be like a thunder-bolt, bursting from a cloud amidst a storm of rattling hail and lightening ! Solim is your chief eunuch, not to watch ye, but to punish ye : let the whole seraglio humble itself before him : he is to inspect your past actions ; and for the time to come he shall bear so strict a hand over ye, that you shall at least lament your loss of liberty, if you lament not that of your virtue.

Paris, the 4th of the Moon
Chahban, 1719.

LETTER CL.

USBEN to NESSIR, at Ispahan.

HAPPY he, that knowing the value of a calm and undisturbed life, reposes his heart amidst his own family, and knows no other country but that wherein he drew his first breath !

I live here in a barbarous climate, present to every thing that makes me uneasy, absent from every thing that may make me happy : a heaviness seizes me ; I am sadly dejected ; I sink beneath the pressure : methinks I am going to be annihilated ; nor do I scarce feel myself to be alive, but only at such times when a dismal fit of jealousy begins to kindle itself, and breed in my soul fears, suspicions, hatreds and repinings.

Thou knowest me, Nessir ; thou hast always been as thoroughly acquainted with my heart as with thy own : I should move thy pity, wert thou to know my deplorable condition : sometimes I wait six long months for news from the seraglio : I count the moments as they slide away ; my impatience make them seem long and tedious : and when the long-looked-for minute approaches, there is a sudden revolution in my heart, my hand trembles in opening the fatal letter : that disquiet which racked me before, I at such times look upon as the happiest situation I could possible enjoy : and I dread being put out of it by a blow that will be more cruel to me than a thousand deaths.

But whatever reason I had to leave my country ; though I owe my life to my retreat ; I can no longer, Neffir, continue in this terrible exile. Ah ! why do I survive the chagrin that every moment preys upon me ? I have a thousand times pressed Rica to leave this strange land : but he opposes all my resolutions : he frames a thousand pretences : he seems to have forgot his country, or rather he seems to have forgot his friend ; so unconcerned is he at my uneasiness.

Wo is me ! I long to re-visit my native country, perhaps to become still more wretched ! What shall I do there ? Only bring back an object for my enemies to wreak their malice upon. This is not all : I shall enter into the seraglio : I shall there demand an account of the fatal hours that passed in my absence : and if I find any one guilty, what will become of me ? If only the idea of it is so intolerable to me at this distance, how shall I bear it when my presence shall render it more sensible ? How must it be for me, to see and to hear what I cannot so much as think of, without shivering with horror ? Lastly, how must it be, when the punishments which I myself shall pronounce, shall be the eternal marks of my confusion and distraction ?

I shall go and shut myself up within those walls, less terrible to the women that are kept there, than to me : I shall enter with all my suspicions about me : their fond caresses will not in the least diminish them : in bed, in their very arms, I shall enjoy nothing but disquiet ; a time so unfit for reflection, my jealousy will find matter for it : worthless scum of the creation ! vile slaves whose heart has been for ever shut to every sentiment of love, you would cease

to lament your condition, did you but know the unhappiness of mine !

Paris, 4th of the Moon

Chahban, 1717.

LETTER CLI.

ROXANA to USBEK, at Paris.

HORROR, darkness, and fear, reign throughout the whole seraglio : it is wrapped in a terrible mourning : a tyger each moment lets loose all his rage ; he has sentenced to a most severe punishment, two white eunuchs that have confessed nothing but their innocence : he has sold part of our slaves ; and has obliged us to interchange among ourselves such others as he did not dispose of. Zachi and Zelis have received in their chamber, in the obscurity of the night, a most shameful treatment : the sacrilegious wretch was so bold as to lay his vile hands on them : he keeps us shut up in our respective apartments : and though no soul is with us, he obliges us to be always veiled : we are not suffered to speak to each other : it were a crime for any body to write to us ; in short, we have liberty to do nothing but to weep.

A band of new eunuchs is entered into the seraglio, where they besiege us night and day : our sleep is incessantly interrupted by their real or pretended suspicions. All my comfort is, that this

cannot last long, and that my afflictions will end with my life, and that very soon : cruel Usbek, I shall not give thee an opportunity to put a stop to these outrages.

From the seraglio of Ispahan, the 2d of the Moon
Maharram, 1720.

LETTER CLII.

SOLIM to USBEK, at Paris.

ILament my fate, magnificent lord ! and thy fate I lament too : never did faithful servant feel such a weight of woe as I do. Behold here thy misfortunes and mine : I cannot write them without trembling.

I swear by all the prophets in heaven, that from the time thou intrustedst thy wives to my care, I have watched them night and day : I have not one moment suspended my vigilance : I began my ministry with chastisements ; which I put a stop to without quitting my natural austerity.

But what am I talking of ? Why should I boast to thee of a fidelity that has been of no use to thee ? forget all my past services : look upon me as a traitor, and punish me for all those crimes which I have not been able to prevent.

Roxana, the proud Roxana ! O Heavens ! whom shall we trust ? Thou did suspect Zachi, and wast perfectly secure of Roxana ; but her stern virtue was all a cheat ; it was only a veil to her perfidiousness ; I surprized her in the arms of a young man, who, as soon as he saw he was discovered, fell upon me, gave me two wounds with his dagger ; the eunuchs

coming in at the noise, surrounded him : he defended himself a considerable time, and wounded several of them ; he attempted to go back into the chamber, to die, he said, in Roxana's sight : but at length he was overpowered, and fell dead at our feet.

I know not, sublime lord, whether I ought to wait for thy severe orders : thou hast committed thy vengeance to my care, and I ought not to defer it.

From the seraglio at Ispahan,

the 8th of the Moon

Rebiab, 1720.

L E T T E R CLIII.

ROXANA to USBEK, at Paris.

YES, I have deceived thee, I have corrupted thy eunuchs : I made a sport of thy jealousy, and found means to turn thy hated seraglio into a place of pleasure and delight.

I feel the near approach of death ; the poison is working in my veins. For, what should I do here, since the only man that made life agreeable is no more ? I am dying : my ghost is upon the wing, but takes its flight in good company : I have just sent before me those sacrilegious guardians that have shed the purest blood in the world.

How couldest thou think me so credulous, as to fancy myself sent into the world for no other purpose than to adore thy caprices ? that at the same time thou allowedst thyself all manner of liberties, thou hadst a right to confine all my desires ? No : I lived indeed in servitude, but still I was free : I reformed thy laws by those of nature, and my mind still kept itself independent.

Thou oughtest even to thank me for the sacrifice I made thee, in humbling myself so much as to seem faithful to thee, in poorly confining within my heart what I ought to have made conspicuous to the whole world. Lastly, in profaning of virtue, by suffering to go by that name my submission to thy whims.

Thou wast amazed at not finding in me the transports of love : hadst thou thoroughly known me, thou hadst found nothing in my heart but the most violent hatred.

But thou hast had a long time the advantage of believing, that a heart like mine was a slave to thee : we were both of us happy : you fancied you cheated me, and I all the while actually cheated you.

Doubtless this language seems new to thee : is it possible, after I have overwhelmed thee with grief, I should likewise force thee to admire my courage ? But it is done : the poison consumes me : my strength forsakes me : my pen drops out of my hand : I feel even my very hated decay : I am dying.

From the seraglio at Ispahan, the 8th of the Moon Rebiab, 1720.

THE END.



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